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ON THE
ROMAN EMPIRE.

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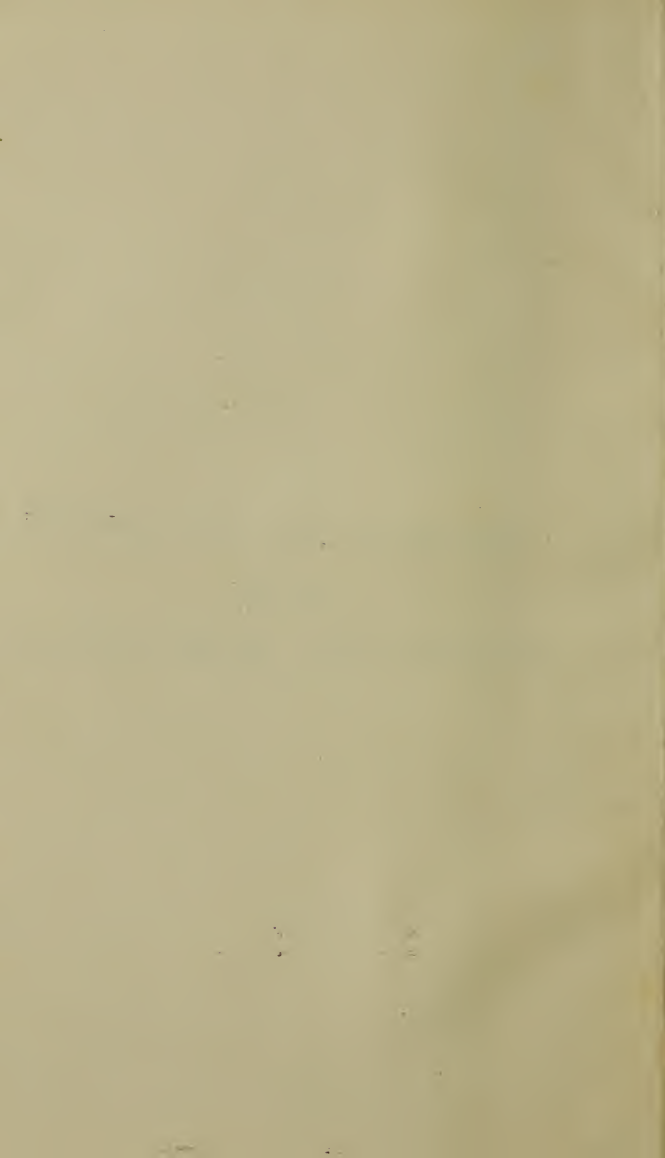
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June 13 - 1907.

GRANDEUR AND DECLENSION
OF THE
ROMAN EMPIRE.



MONTESQUIEU'S
CONSIDERATIONS
ON THE CAUSE OF THE
GRANDEUR AND DECLENSION
OF THE
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REVISED TRANSLATION FROM THE FRENCH

GLASGOW :
W. S. SIME, 130 SAUCHIEHALL STREET.
LONDON : HOULSTON AND SONS.

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CONSIDERATIONS ON THE
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CHAPTER I.

THE INFANCY OF ROME. THE WARS IT SUSTAINED.

WE are not to form to ourselves an idea of the city of Rome, in its infancy, from the cities which exist at this time, except we have in view those of the Crim Tartars, built for the stowing and securing of plunder, cattle, fruits, and other produce of the country. The ancient names of the chief places in Rome are all relative to this use.

The city was even without streets, unless we will give this name to the continuation of roads which centre in it. The houses were straggling, built after an irregular manner, and very small, for the inhabitants being always either at their work, or in the public square, were very seldom at home.

But the greatness of Rome soon appeared in its public edifices. Works which have raised, and still raise, the greatest idea of its power, were formed under its kings. They began already to lay the foundation of the city which was to be eternal.

Romulus, and his successors, were engaged in almost perpetual wars with their neighbours, to increase the number of their citizens, their women, and their territories. They used to return to the city loaded with the spoils of

conquered nations, and these spoils, which consisted of wheatsheaves and flocks, used to fill them with the greatest joy. Such is the origin of triumphs to which that city afterwards chiefly owed its grandeur.

The strength of the Romans was greatly increased by their union with the Sabines, a stubborn, warlike people, resembling the Lacedæmonians, from whom they sprung. Romulus copied the form of their shields, which were large, and used them ever afterwards instead of the small buckler of Argos. And it is to be observed that the circumstance which chiefly raised the Romans to the sovereignty of the world, was, their laying aside their own customs as soon as they met with better among the people they conquered; and it is well known that they fought successively against all nations.

It was a maxim then among the republics of Italy, that treaties made with one king were not obligatory towards his successor. This was a sort of law of nations among them. Thus everything which had been submitted to by one king of Rome, they thought themselves disengaged from under another, and wars continually begot wars.

The reign of Numa, being long and pacific, was very well adapted to leave the Romans in their humble condition; and had their territory in that age been less confined, and their power greater, it is probable their fortune would have been fixed for ever.

One cause of the prosperity of Rome was that all her kings were great men. No other history presents us with an uninterrupted succession of such statesmen and such captains.

In the infancy of societies, the leading men in the republic formed the constitution; afterwards, the constitution forms the leading men in the republic.

Tarquin took upon him the government, without being elected by the senate, or the people. His power became hereditary; he rendered it absolute. These two resolutions were soon followed by a third.

Sextus, the son of Tarquin, by violating the chastity of Lucretia, took such a step as has seldom failed to drive tyrants from the cities over which they presided: for when

once a people are made strongly sensible, by the commission of so enormous a crime, of the slavery to which they are reduced, they immediately form a desperate resolution.

A people may suffer, without murmuring, the imposing of new tributes, since they are not certain but that some advantage may accrue to themselves from the disposal of the monies so levied ; but when an insult is put upon them, they are affected with their misfortune only ; and this they aggravate, by fixing to it the idea of all the calamities which can possibly happen.

It must however be confessed that the death of Lucretia, did no more than occasion, accidentally, the revolution which happened ; for a haughty, enterprising, bold people confined within walls, must necessarily either shake off the yoke, or soften the asperity of their manners.

From the situation of things at that time, this was the result, either that Rome should change the form of its government, or continue for ever a small poor monarchy.

Modern history furnishes us with a very remarkable example of what happened at that time in Rome ; for as men have been sensible of the same passions in all ages, the occasions which give rise to great revolutions are various, but the causes are for ever the same.

As Henry VII. of England increased the power of the Commons, merely to humble the nobility, so Servius Tullius enlarged the privileges of the people, in order to depress the senate ; but the people growing afterwards bolder, ruined of each of the monarchies under which they lived.

No flattering colours have been employed in the picture which is left us of Tarquin ; his name has not escaped any of the orators who declaimed against tyranny ; but his conduct before his calamities, which it is evident he foresaw, his gentleness and humanity towards the conquered, his beneficence to the soldiers, the arts by which he engaged such numbers to endeavour at his preservation, the edifices he raised for the public use, his courage in the field, the constancy and patience with which he bore his misfortunes, a twenty years war he either carried on, or caused to be carried on, against the Romans, though

deprived of his kingdom and very poor. These things, and the resources perpetually found, prove manifestly that he was no contemptible person.

The rank or place which posterity bestows, is subject, as all others are, to the whim and caprice of fortune. Woe to the reputation of that monarch who is oppressed by a party which after becomes the prevailing one, or who has endeavoured to destroy a prepossession that survives him.

The Romans, after having banished their kings, appointed consuls annually ; a circumstance which contributed to raise them to so exalted a pitch. In the lives of all princes there are certain periods of ambition, and these are afterwards succeeded by other passions, and even by indolence ; but the commonwealth being governed by magistrates who were changed every year, and who endeavoured to signalize themselves in their employment, in the view of obtaining new ones, ambition had not a moment to lose. Hence it was that these magistrates were ever persuading the senate to stir up the people to war, and pointed out to them new enemies every day.

This body (the senate) was inclined enough to do this of their own accord ; for, being quite tired of the complaints and demands of the people, they endeavoured to remove the occasion of their disquiet, and to employ them in foreign wars.

Now the common people were generally pleased with war, because a method had been found to make it beneficial to them, by the judicious distribution that was made of the spoils.

Rome being a city in which neither trade nor arts flourished, the several individuals had no other way of enriching themselves but by rapine.

An order and discipline was therefore established in the way and manner of pillaging, and this was pretty near the same with that now practiced among the inhabitants of Lesser Tartary.

The plunder was laid together and afterwards distributed among the soldiers ; not even the minutest article was lost, because every man, before he set out, swore not to embezzle anything ; besides that the Romans were, of all

nations, the most religious observers of oaths, these being considered as the sinews of their military discipline.

In fine, those citizens who staid at home, shared also in the fruits of the victory ; for part of the conquered lands was confiscated, and this was subdivided into two portions, one of which was sold for the benefit of the public, and the other divided, by the commonwealth among such citizens as were but in poor circumstances, upon condition of their paying a small acknowledgment,

As the consuls had no other way of obtaining the honour of a triumph than by a conquest or a victory, this made them rush into the field with unparalleled impetuosity ; they marched directly towards the enemy, when force immediately decided the contest.

Rome was therefore engaged in an eternal and ever obstinate war. Now a nation that is always at war, and that too from the very frame and essence of its government, must necessarily be destroyed or subdue all other nations ; for, these being sometimes at war, and at other times in peace, could never be so able to invade others, nor so well prepared to defend themselves,

By this means the Romans attained a perfect knowledge in the military arts. In transient wars most of the examples are lost ; peace suggests different ideas, and we forget not only our faults but even our virtues.

Another consequence of the maxim of waging perpetual war was, that the Romans never concluded a peace but when they were victorious ; and indeed, to what purpose would it be to make an ignominious peace with one nation and afterwards go and invade another ?

In this view their pretensions rose always in proportion to their defeat ; by this they surprised the conqueror, and laid themselves under a greater necessity of conquering.

Being for ever obnoxious to the most severe vengeance, perseverance and valour became necessary virtues ; and these could not be distinguished among them from self-love, from the love of one's family, of one's country, and whatever is dearest amongst men.

The same had happened to Italy which befel America in late ages, the natives of the former, quite helpless and

dispersed up and down, having resigned their habitations to new comers, it was afterwards peopled by three different nations, the Tuscans, the Gauls, and the Greeks. The Gauls had no manner of relation or affinity either with the Greeks or Tuscans ; the latter formed a society which had its peculiar language, customs, and morals ; and the Grecian colonies, who descended from different nations that were often at variance, had pretty separate interests.

The world in that age was not like the world in ours ; voyages, conquest, traffic, the establishment of mighty states, the invention of post offices, of the sea-compass, and of printing ; these, with a certain general polity, have made correspondence much easier, and give rise among us to an art called by the name of politics ; every man sees at one glance whatever is transacted in the whole universe : and if a people discover but ever so little ambition, all the nations around them are immediately terrified.

The people of Italy had none of those engines which were employed in sieges ; and further, as the soldiers were not allowed any stipend, there was no possibility of keeping them long before a town or fortress. Hence it was that few of their wars were decisive ; these fought from no other motive but merely to plunder the enemy's camp or his lands, after which, both the conqueror and the conquered marched back to their respective cities. This circumstance gave rise to the strong resistance which the people of Italy made, and at the same time to the inflexible resolution the Romans formed to subdue them ; this favoured the latter with victories, which no way depraved their morals and left them in their original poverty.

Had the Romans made a rapid conquest of the neighbouring cities, they would have been in a declining condition at the arrival of Pyrrhus, of the Gauls, and of Hannibal ; and by a fate common to most governments in the world, they would have made too quick a transition from poverty to riches, and from riches to depravity.

But Rome, for ever struggling, and ever meeting with obstacles, made other nations tremble at its power, and at the same time was unable to extend it, and exercised in a very narrow compass of ground, a train of virtues that

were to prove of the most fatal consequence to the universe.

All the people of Italy were not equally warlike ; those who inhabited the eastern part, as the Tarentines and the Capuans, all the cities of Campania, and of Græcia Major, were quite immersed in indolence and in pleasures ; but the Latins, the Hernici, the Sabines, the Æqui, and the Volscians were passionately fond of war ; these nations lay round Rome ; the resistance they made to that city was incredible, and they surpassed them in stubbornness and inflexibility.

The Latin cities sprung from Alban colonies, which were founded by Latinus Sylvius ; besides their common extraction with the Romans, there were several rites and ceremonies common to both ; and Servius Tullius had engaged them to build a temple at Rome, to serve at the centre of union of the two nations. Losing a battle near the lake of Regillus, they were subjected to an alliance, and forced to associate in the wars which the Romans waged.

It was manifestly seen during the short time that the tyranny of the decemvirs lasted, how much the aggrandizing of Rome depended on its liberty. The government seemed to have lost the soul which animated even to the minutest part of it.

There remained at that time but two sorts of people in the city, those who submitted to slavery, and those who, for their own private interest, endeavoured to enslave the rest. The senators withdrew from Rome as from a foreign city ; and the neighbouring nations did not meet with the least resistance from any quarter.

The senate having found means to give the soldiers a regular stipend, the siege of Veii was undertaken, which lasted ten years. But now a new art, and a new system of war, were seen to arise among the Romans ; their successes were more signal and conspicuous ; they made a better advantage of their victories ; their conquests were greater, they sent out more colonies. In fine, the taking of Veii proved a kind of revolution.

But all this did not lessen their toils ; if on one side they attacked with greater vigour the Tuscans, the Æqui, and the Volscians, for this very reason they were abandoned by

the Latins and the Hernici, their allies, who were armed after the same manner, and observed the same discipline with themselves ; this engaged the Tuscans to form new alliances, and prompted the Samnites, the most martial people of all Italy, to involve them in a furious war.

After the soldiers received pay, the senate no longer distributed to them the lands of the conquered people, upon whom other conditions were now imposed ; they were obliged, for instance, to pay the army a certain quota for a time, and to send supplies of clothes and corn.

The taking of Rome by the Gauls did no way lessen its strength ; almost the whole army, which was dispersed rather than overcome, withdrew to Veii ; the people sheltered themselves in the adjacent cities ; and the burning of Rome was no more than the setting fire to a few of the shepherds' cottages.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE SCIENCE OF WAR, AS PRACTICED BY THE ROMANS.

As the Romans devoted themselves entirely to war, and considered it as the only science, they therefore bent all their thoughts and the genius with which they were informed to the improvement of it ; doubtless a god, says Vegetius, inspired them with the idea of the legion.

They judged that it would be necessary to arm the soldiers who composed the legion with weapons whether offensive or defensive, of a stronger heavier kind than those of any other nation.

But as some things must be done in war which a heavy body is not able to execute, the Romans would have the legion include within itself a band of light forces, which might issue from it in order to provoke the enemy to battle, or draw back into it in case of necessity ; they also would have this legion strengthened with cavalry, with archers, and slingers to pursue those who fled, and complete the victory ; that it should be defended by military engines of every kind, which it drew after it, and that every evening this body should entrench itself, and be, as Vegetius observes, a kind of stronghold.

But that the Roman soldiers might be able to carry heavier arms than other men it was necessary they should become more than men ; and this they became by perpetual labour, which increased their vigour, and by exercises that gave them an activity, which is no more than a just distribution of the strength we are invigorated with.

It is observed in this age that the immoderate labour which soldiers are obliged to undergo destroys our armies, and yet it was by incredible labour that the Romans preserved themselves. The reason I take to be this : their toils were continual and uninterrupted, whereas our soldiers are ever shifting from the extremes of labour to the extremes of idleness, than which nothing can possibly be more destructive.

I must here take notice of what authors relate concerning the training up of the Roman soldiery. They were innured to the military pace, that is, to walk twenty miles, and sometimes four-and-twenty, in five hours. During these marches, they carried burdens of three score pounds weight ; they habituated themselves to running and leaping, armed cap-a-pie ; in their exercises they made use of swords, javelins and arrows, double the weight of common weapons, and these exercises were carried on without intermission.

The camp was not the only military school, there being in Rome a place in which the citizens used to perform exercises (it was the *Campus Martius*) ; after their fatigues they plunged into the Tiber, to accustom themselves to swimming and cleanse away the dust and sweat.

We have no very just idea of bodily exercise ; the man who assiduously applies himself to it, appears to us rather in a contemptible light, inasmuch as the far greater part of his exercises have for their object nothing more than self-gratification ; whereas, among the ancients every exercise, even down to that of dancing, made a part of the art military.

With us moderns a deep knowledge in the use of warlike weapons is become ridiculous ; for since the custom of single combats was introduced, fencing has been regarded as the sciences of quarrelsome fellows or cowards.

Those who criticise Homer for inspiring his heroes with strength, dexterity and agility of body, should hold Sallust ridiculous, who celebrates Pompey for running, leaping, or carrying a burthen as well as any man of his time.

Whenever the Romans thought themselves exposed to any danger, or were desirous of repairing some loss, it was a constant practice among them to invigorate and give new life to their military discipline. Are they engaged in a war with the Latins, a people no less martial than themselves ? Manlius reflects upon the best methods of strengthening the command in the field, and puts to death his own son for conquering without his orders. Are they defeated before Numantia ? Scipio *Æmilianus* immediately removes the several blandishments, which had enervated them. Have the Roman legions passed under the yoke at Numedia ? Metellus wipes away their ignominy, the instant he has obliged them to resume their ancient institutions. Marius, that he may be enabled to vanquish the Cimbri and the Teutones, begins by diverting the course of rivers ; and Sylla employs in such hard labours his soldiers, who were terrified at the war which was carrying on against Mithridates, that they sue for battle to put an end to their hardships.

Publius Nasica made the Romans build a fleet of ships, at a time when they had no occasion for such a force ; these people dreaded idleness more than an enemy.

Aulus Gellius gives no very good reasons for the customs among the Romans of letting soldiers' blood who had committed a fault ; the true reason is, that strength being the chief qualification of a soldier, this was the means of adding, not to his weakness, but to his disgrace.

These men thus inured were generally healthy and vigorous ; we do not find by historians that the Roman armies, which waged war in so great a variety of climate, fell often a prey to diseases ; whereas in the present age we daily see armies, without once engaging, perish and melt away if I may use the expression, in a single campaign.

Desertions are very frequent among us for this reason, because the soldiers are the dregs of every nation, and not one of them possesses, or thinks himself possessed of, a

certain advantage which gives him a superiority over his comrades. But among the Romans they were less frequent, it being scarce possible that soldiers, raised from among a people naturally so haughty and imperious, and so sure of commanding over others, should demean themselves to such a degree as to cease to be Romans.

As their armies were not great, they were easily subsisted ; the commander had a better opportunity of knowing the several individuals, and could more easily perceive the various faults and misdemeanours committed by the soldiery.

The violence of their exercises, and the wonderful roads they built, enabled them to make long and speedy marches. Their sudden presence damped the spirit of their opposers ; they showed themselves, especially after some unfortunate event, at a time when their enemies were in that state of negligence which is generally consequent on victory.

In the battles fought in our age, every single soldier has very little security and confidence, except in the multitude ; but among the Romans, every individual, more robust and of greater experience in war, as well as more inured to the fatigues of it, than his enemy, relied upon himself only. He was naturally endued with courage, or in other words, with that virtue which a sensibility of our own strength inspires.

As no troops in the world were, in any age, so well disciplined, it was hardly possible that in a battle, how unfortunate soever, but some Romans must rally in one part or other of it ; or, on the other side, but that the enemy must be defeated in some part of the field ; and, indeed, we find every where in history, that whenever the Romans happened to be overpowered at the beginning, either by numbers or the fierceness of the onset, they at last wrested the laurel out of the enemy's hands.

Their chief care was to examine in what particular their enemies had an advantage over them, and when this was found they immediately rectified it. They accustomed themselves to behold the blood and the wounds of the gladiators. The cutting swords of the Gauls and the elephants of Pyrrhus intimidated them but once. They

strengthened their cavalry first, by taking the bridles from the horses, that their impetuosity might be boundless, and afterwards by intermixing them with Velites; when they understood the excellence of the Spanish sword, they quitted their own for it. They baffled all the art of the most experienced pilots, by the invention of an engine which is described by Polybius. In fine, as Josephus observes, war was a subject of meditation to the Romans. and peace an exercise.

If any nation boasted, either from nature or its institution, any peculiar advantage, the Romans immediately made use of it; they employed their utmost endeavours to procure horses from Neumedia, bowmen from Crete, slingers from the Baleares, and ships from the Rhodians.

To conclude, no nation in the world ever prepared for war with so much wisdom, and carried it on with so much intrepidity.

CHAPTER III.

THE METHODS BY WHICH THE ROMANS RAISED THEMSELVES TO EMPIRE.

As the people of Europe, in this age, have very near the same arts, the same arms, the same discipline, and the same manner of making war, the prodigious fortune to which the Romans attained seems incredible to us. Besides, power is at this time divided so disproportionably, that it is not possible for a petty state to raise itself, merely by its own strength, from the low condition in which Providence has placed it.

This merits some reflections, otherwise we might behold several events without being able to account for them; and for want of having a perfect idea of the different situation of things, we should believe, in perusing ancient history, that we view a set of men different from ourselves.

Experience has shown perpetually that an European prince who has a million of subjects, cannot, without destroying himself, keep up and maintain above ten thousand soldiers; consequently, great nations are only possessed of armies.

But the case was different anciently with regard to

commonwealths ; for this proportion between the soldiers and the rest of the people, which is now as one to an hundred, might, in those times, be pretty near as one is to eight.

The founders of ancient commonwealths had made an equal distribution of the lands ; this circumstance alone raised a nation to power, that is to say, made it a well regulated society. This also gave strength to its armies, it being equally the interest (and this too was very great) of every individual to exert himself in defence of his country.

When laws were not executed in their full vigour, affairs returned back to the same point in which we now see them. The avarice of some particular persons, and the lavish profuseness of others, occasioned the lands to become the property of a few ; immediately arts were introduced to supply the reciprocal wants of the rich and poor, by which means there were but very few soldiers or citizens seen, for the revenues of the lands that had before been employed to support the latter, were now bestowed wholly on slaves and artificers, who administered to the luxury of the new proprietors, for otherwise the government, which, how licentious soever it be, must exist, would have been destroyed. Before the corruption of the state, the original revenues of it were divided among the soldiers, that is the labourers ; after it was corrupted they went first to the rich, who let them out to slaves and artificers, from whom they received by way of tribute a part for the maintenance of the soldiers. And it was impossible that people of this cast should be good soldiers, they being cowardly and abject, already corrupted by the luxury of cities, and often by the very art they professed, not to mention that as they could not properly call any country their own, and reaped the fruits of their industry in every climate, they had very little either to lose or keep.

In the survey of the people of Rome, some time after the expulsion of the kings, and in that taken by Demetrius Phalereus at Athens, the number of inhabitants was found nearly equal ; Rome had four hundred and forty thousand, Athens four hundred and thirty-one thousand. But the survey at Rome was made at the time when its establish-

ment was come to maturity, and that of Athens when it was quite corrupt. We find that the number of citizens grown up to manhood made at Rome a fourth part of its inhabitants, and at Athens a little less than the twentieth ; the strength of Rome, therefore, to that of Athens, was at these different times almost as four to twenty—that is, it was five times larger.

Agis and Cleomenes observing that instead of thirty thousand citizens (for so many were at Sparta in Lycurgus's time) there were but seven hundred, scarce a hundred of whom possessed lands, and that all the rest were no more than a cowardly populace ; they undertook to revive the laws enacted on this occasion ; and from that period Lacedæmonia recovered its former power, and again became formidable to all the Greeks.

It was the equal distribution of lands that at first enabled Rome to soar above its humble condition ; and this the Romans were strongly sensible of in their corrupted state.

This commonwealth was confined to narrow bounds, when the Latins, having refused to succour them with the troops which had been stipulated, ten legions were presently raised in the city only ; scarce at this time, says Livy, Rome, whom the whole universe is not able to contain, could levy such a force, were an enemy to appear suddenly under its wall, a sure indication that we have not risen in power, and have only increased the luxury and wealth which incommode us.

Tell me, would Tiberius Gracchus say to the nobles, which is the most valuable character, that of a citizen or of a perpetual slave ; who is most useful, a soldier or a man entirely unfit for war ? Will you merely for the sake of enjoying a few more acres of land than the rest of the citizens, quite lay aside the hopes of conquering the rest of the world, or be exposed to see yourselves dispossessed by the enemy, of those very lands which you refuse us ?

CHAPTER IV.

OF THE GAULS.—OF PYRRHUS.—PARALLEL BETWEEN
CARTHAGE AND ROME.—THE WAR OF HANNIBAL.

THE Romans were engaged in several wars against the Gauls. A thirst of glory, a contempt of death, and an inflexible resolution of conquering, were equal in both nations, but the weapons they used were different; the bucklers of the latter were small, and their swords unfit for execution; and, indeed, the Gauls were cut to pieces by the Romans, much after the same manner as the Mexicans in these latter ages by the Spaniards; and a surprising circumstance is, that though these people were combating perpetually with the Romans, they yet suffered themselves to be destroyed one after another, without their ever being sensible of, inquiring after, or obviating the cause of their calamities.

Pyrrhus invaded the Romans at a time when they were strong enough to oppose the power of his arms, and to be taught by the victories he obtained over them; from him they learned to entrench themselves, as also the choice and proper disposition of a camp; he accustomed them to elephants, and prepared them for mightier wars.

The grandeur of Pyrrhus was confined merely to his personal qualities. Plutarch informs us that he was obliged to begin the war of Macedonia, from his inability to maintain any longer the six thousand foot and five hundred horse in his service. This prince, sovereign of a small country, which has never made the least figure since his time, was a military rambler, who was continually forming new enterprises, because he could not subsist but by enterprising.

Tarentum, his ally, had much degenerated from the institution of the Lacedæmonians, her ancestors. He might have done great things with the assistance of the Samnites, but they were almost quite destroyed by the Romans.

As the Carthaginians grew wealthy sooner than the Romans, so they were sooner corrupted; thus whilst at

Rome public employments were made the reward of virtue only, and no other emolument accrued from them than honour, and a preference in toils, at Carthage the several advantages which the public can bestow on particular persons were venal, and every service done by such persons was there paid by the public.

A monarchy is not dragged nearer to the brink of ruin by the tyranny of a prince than a commonwealth by a lukewarmness and indifference for the general good. The advantage of a free state is, that the revenues are employed in it to the best purposes ; but where does not the reverse of this happen ? The advantage of a free state is, that it admits of no favourites ; but when the contrary is seen, and instead of the friends and relations of a prince, great fortunes are amassed for the friends and relations of all persons who have any share in the government ; in this case an universal ruin must ensue ; the laws are then eluded more dangerously, than they are infringed by a sovereign prince, who being always the greatest citizen in the state, is most concerned to labour at its preservation.

By the constant practice of ancient customs and manners and a peculiar use that was made of poverty, the fortunes of all the people in Rome were very near upon a level ; but in Carthage some particular persons boasted the wealth of kings.

The two prevailing factions in Carthage were so divided, that the one was always for peace and the other always for war, by which means it was impossible for that city to enjoy tho one or engage in the other to advantage.

In Rome, war immediately united the several interests ; but in Carthage it divided them still more.

In a monarchy, feuds and divisions are easily quieted, because the prince is invested with a coercive power to curb both parties ; but they are most lasting in a commonwealth, because the evil generally seizes the very power which only could have wrought a cure.

In Rome, which was governed by laws, the people entrusted the senate with the management of affairs ; but in Carthage, which was governed by fraud and dissoluteness, the people would themselves transact all things.

Carthage, in warring with all its riches against the poverty of Rome, had a disadvantage in this very circumstance ; for gold and silver may be exhausted, but virtue, perseverance, strength, and poverty are inexhaustible.

The Romans were ambitious through pride, and the Carthaginians through avarice ; the former would command, the latter amass ; and these, whose minds were wholly turned to traffic, perpetually casting up their income and expenses, never engaged in any war from inclination.

The loss of battles, the decrease of a people, the decay of trade, the consumption of the public treasure, the insurrection of neighbouring nations, might force the Carthaginians to submit to the severest terms of peace : but Rome was not swayed by the consideration of blessings or calamities, being determined by no other motive but its glory ; and as the Romans were persuaded they could not exist without commanding over others, neither hopes nor fears of any kind could prevail with them to conclude a peace, the conditions of which were not prescribed by themselves.

Nothing is so powerful as a commonwealth, in which the laws are exactly observed ; and this not from fear nor from reason, but from a passionate impulse, as in Rome and Lacedæmon ; for then the wisdom of a good legislature is united to all the strength a faction could possibly boast.

The Carthaginians made use of foreign forces, and the Romans employed none but their own. As the latter had never considered the vanquished but merely as so many instruments for future triumphs, they made soldiers of the several people they conquered, and the greater opposition those made, the more worthy they judged them of being incorporated into their republic. Thus we find the Samnites who were not subdued till after four and twenty triumphs, became auxiliaries to the Romans ; and some time before the second Punic war, they raised from among that nation and their allies, that is, from a country of little more extent than territories of the Pope and Naples, seven hundred thousand foot, and seventy thousand horse to oppose the Gauls.

In the height of the second Punic war, Rome had always a standing army of twenty-two or twenty-four legions ; and

yet it appears by Livy, that at this time the census, or general survey, amounted to but about 137,000 citizens.

The Carthaginians employed a great number of troops in invading others, and the Romans in defending themselves; the latter armed, as we have just now seen, a prodigious multitude of men to oppose the Gauls and Hannibal who invaded them; and they sent out no more than two legions against the most powerful kings; by which means their forces were inexhaustible.

Carthage was not so strong from its situation, as Rome from the spot on which it stood: the latter had thirty colonies round it, all which were as so many bulwarks. The Romans were never abandoned by one of their allies till the battle of Cannæ; the reason is, the Samnites and other nations of Italy were used to their sovereignty.

As most of the cities of Africa were poorly fortified they presently surrendered to the first enemy that appeared under their walls; so that Agathocles, Regulus, Scipio, in a word, all who make a descent on those places, immediately spread despair through all Carthage.

We can ascribe to nothing but to an evil administration, the several calamities which the Carthaginians suffered during the whole war that Scipio carried on against them; their city, and even their armies were famished, at the same time that the Romans enjoyed a profusion of all things.

Among the Carthaginians, the armies which had been defeated, grew more insolent upon it, insomuch that they sometimes used to crucify their generals, punishing them in this manner for their own cowardice. Among the Romans, the consul, after punishing such soldiers as had fled from their colours, by a decimation, marched the surviving forces against the enemy.

The government of the Carthaginians was vastly oppressive: They had trampled so much upon the Spaniards, that, when the Romans arrived among them, they were considered as their deliverers; and if we reflect upon the immense sums it cost the Carthaginians to maintain, in that country, a war which proved fatal to them, it will appear that injustice is very improvident, and is no mistress of all the promises.

The founding of Alexandria had very much lessened the trade of Carthage. In the first ages, superstition used to banish, in some measure, all foreigners from Egypt; and after the Persians had conquered this kingdom, they had bent their whole thoughts to the weakening of their new subjects; but under the Grecian monarchs, Egypt possessed almost the whole commerce of the universe, and that of Carthage began to decay.

Such powers as are established by commerce, may subsist for a long series of years in their humble condition, but their grandeur is of short duration; they rise by little and little, and in an imperceptible manner, for they do not perform any particular exploit which may make a noise, and signalize their power: But when they have once raised themselves to so exalted a pitch, that it is impossible but all must see them, every one endeavours to deprive this nation of an advantage which it has snatched, as it were, from the rest of the world.

The Carthaginian cavalry was preferable to that of the Romans for these two reasons; first, because the horses of Numidia and Spain were better than those of Italy; secondly, because the Roman cavalry was but indifferently provided with arms; for the Romans, as Polybius informs us, did not introduce any change on this occasion, till such time as they fought in Greece.

In the first Punic war, Regulus was defeated as soon as the Carthaginians made choice of plains for their cavalry to engage in; and in the second, Hannibal owed his most glorious victories to the Numidians.

Scipio, by the conquest of Spain and the alliance he made with Masinissa, deprived the Carthaginians of this superiority: The Numidian cavalry won the battle of Zama, and put an end to the war.

The Carthaginians had greater experience at sea, and were better skilled in the working of ships than the Romans: but this advantage seems to have been less in those ages than it would be in the present.

As the ancients had not the use of the sea-compass, they were confined almost to coasting; and indeed they had nothing but gallies, which were small and flat-bottomed;

most roads were to them as so many harbours ; the knowledge of their pilots was very narrow and contracted, and their tackle extremely simple. Their art itself was so imperfect, that as much is now done with an hundred oars, as in those ages with a thousand.

Their larger vessels had a disadvantage in this, that being moved with difficulty by the crew of galley-slaves, it was impossible for them to make the necessary evolutions. Mark Antony experienced this, in the most fatal manner, at Actium ; for his ships were not able to move about, when attacked on all sides by the lighter vessels of Augustus.

As the ancients used nothing but galleons, the lighter vessels easily broke the oars of the greater ones, which were then but as so many unwieldy, immoveable machines, like modern ships when they have lost their masts.

Since the invention of the sea-compass, different methods have been employed ; oars have been laid aside ; the main ocean has been visited, great ships have been built ; the machine has become more complicated, and the practices have been multiplied.

The discovery of gunpowder has occasioned a circumstance one would no way have suspected, which is, that the strength of fleets depends more than ever upon art ; for in order to resist the fury of the cannon, and prevent the being exposed to a superior fire, it was necessary to build great ships ; but the power of the art must be proportioned to the bulk of the machine.

The small vessels of the ancients used often to grapple suddenly with one another, on which occasion the soldiers engaged on both sides : a whole land army was shipped on board a fleet. In the sea fight won by Regulus and his colleague, an hundred and thirty thousand Romans fought against an hundred and fifty thousand Carthaginians. At that time soldiers were looked upon as considerable, and artists the very reverse ; but in these ages the soldiers are considered as a little or nothing, the artists the very contrary.

A strong proof of the difference is, the victory won by Duillius the consul ; the Romans were totally ignorant of navigation ; when a Carthaginian galley happened to be

stranded on their coast, served as a model for the building of others. In three months time their sailors were trained, their fleet was completely fitted out ; the Romans put to sea, came up with the Carthaginians, and defeated them.

In this age, the whole life of a prince is scarce sufficient for the raising and equipping a navy, capable to make head against a power already possessed of the empire of the sea. This perhaps may be the only thing which money cannot of itself effect ; and though a great monarch in our days succeeded immediately in an attempt of this kind, experience has proved to others that such an example is to be admired rather than imitated.

The second Punic war made so much noise in the world that it is known to every one. When we survey attentively the crowd of obstacles that started up before Hannibal, and reflect that this extraordinary man surmounted them all, we view the most august spectacle that antiquity can possibly exhibit.

Rome was a miracle in constancy and resolution after the battles of Ticinus, of Trebia, and Trafymenus ; after the defeat at Cannæ, which was still more fatal to them, though they saw themselves abandoned by most of the nations in Italy, yet they would not sue for peace ; and for this reason the senate never once receded from their ancient maxims. They conducted themselves towards Hannibal in the same manner as they had before behaved with regard to Pyrrhus, to whom they refused all terms of accommodation, till such time as he should leave Italy ; and Dionysius Halicarnasseus informs us that when Coriolanus was treating with the Romans, the senate declared they would never infringe their ancient customs ; that their people could not conclude a peace so long as the enemy should continue in their territories ; but that in case the Volscians would think fit to retire, they then should agree to any terms that were just and reasonable.

Rome was saved by the strength and vigour of its institution ; after the battle of Cannæ their very women were not allowed to shed tears ; the senate refused to ransom the prisoners, and sent the miserable remains of the army to carry on the war in Sicily, unrecompensed,

and deprived of every military honour till such time as Hannibal was driven out of Italy.

On the other side Terentius Varro, the consul, had fled ignominiously as far as Venusia. This man, whose extraction was very mean, had been raised to the consulship merely to mortify the nobles. However, the senate would not enjoy the unhappy triumph; they saw how necessary it was for them to gain the confidence of the people on this occasion; they therefore went out to meet Varro, and returned him thanks for not despairing of the safety of the commonwealth.

It is commonly not the real loss sustained in a battle (that of the slaughter of some thousand men) which proves fatal to a state, but the imaginary loss, the general damp, which deprives it even of that strength and vigour which fortune had left it.

Some things are asserted by all men, because they have been asserted once. It is thought Hannibal committed an egregious error in not laying siege to Rome after the battle of Cannæ. It must be confessed that the inhabitants of the former were at first seized with a panic, but then the surprise and dread of a martial people, which always turns to bravery, is not like that of a despicable populace, who are sensible to nothing but their weakness. A proof Hannibal would not have succeeded is, that the Romans were still powerful enough to send succours where any were wanted.

It is also said that Hannibal was greatly overseen, in marching his army to Capua, where his soldiers enervated themselves; but the people who make these assertions should consider that they do not go back to the true cause of it. Would not every place have proved a Capua to a body of men who had enriched themselves with the spoils of so many victories? Alexander, whose army consisted of his own subjects, made use, on the like occasion, of an expedient which Hannibal, whose army was composed wholly of mercenaries, could not employ; and this was, the setting fire to the baggage of the soldiers, and burning all their wealth and his own. We are told that Kouli Khan, after his conquest of the Indies, left to the share of each

soldier no more than one hundred and fifty silver roupees.

The very conquests of Hannibal began to change the fortune of the war. He did not receive any succours from Carthage, either by the jealousy of one party or the too great confidence of the other : so long as he kept his whole army together, he always defeated the Romans but when he was obliged to put garrisons into cities, to defend his allies, to besiege strong holds, or prevent their being besieged, he then found himself too weak, and lost a great part of his army by piece-meal. Conquests are easily made, because we achieve them with our whole force ; they are retained with difficulty, because we defend them with only a part of our forces.

CHAPTER V.

THE STATE OF GREECE, OF MACEDONIA, OF SYRIA, AND
OF EGYPT, AFTER THE DEPRESSION OF CARTHAGE.

I imagine Hannibal did not abound in witticisms, especially in favour of Fabius and Marcellus against himself. I am sorry to see Livy strew his flowers on these enormous colossuses of antiquity : I wish he had done like Homer, who neglects embellishing them, and knew so well how to put them in motion.

Besides, what Hannibal is made to speak, ought to have common sense : but if, on hearing the defeat of his brother, he said publicly, that it was the prelude of the ruin of Carthage ; could any any thing have a greater tendency to drive to despair a people, who had placed their confidence in him, and to discourage an army which expected such high recompenses after the war

As the Carthaginians lost every battle they fought, either in Spain, in Sicily, or in Sardinia ; Hannibal, whose enemies were fortifying themselves incessantly, whilst very inconsiderable reinforcements were sent him, was reduced to the necessity of engaging in a defensive war : This suggested to the Romans the design of making Africa the seat of war : accordingly Scipio went into that part of the world, and so great was his success, that the Carthaginians were forced to recal from Italy, Hannibal who wept for grief at

his surrendering to the Romans those very plains, in which he had so often triumphed over them.

Whatever is in the power of a great general and a great soldier to perform, all this Hannibal did to save his country : having fruitlessly endeavoured to bring Scipio to pacific terms, he fought a battle, in which fortune seemed to delight in confounding his ability, his experience, and good sense.

Carthage received the conditions of peace, not from an enemy, but from a sovereign ; the citizens of it obliged themselves to pay ten thousand talents in fifty years, to give hostages to deliver up their ships and elephants, and not to engage in any war without the consent of the Romans ; and in order that this republic might always continue in a dejected state, the victors heightened the power of Masinissa, its irreconcilable enemy.

After the depression of Carthage, the Romans were scarce engaged but in petty wars, and obtained mighty victories ; whereas before they had obtained but petty victories, and been engaged in mighty wars.

There were in those times two worlds, as it were, separate from each other ; in one, the Carthaginians and Romans fought, and the other was shaken by the feuds and divisions which had subsisted ever since the death of Alexander : in the latter, no regard was had to the transactions of the western world : for though Philip, King of Macedon, had concluded a treaty with Hannibal, yet very little resulted from it ; and this monarch, who gave the Carthaginians but very inconsiderable succours, just shewed the Romans that he bore them a fruitless ill will.

When two mighty people are seen to wage a long and obstinate war, it is often ill policy to imagine that it is safe for the rest of the world to continue as so many idle spectators, for whichever of the two people triumphs over the other, engages immediately in new wars ; and a nation of soldiers marches and invades nations who are but so many citizens.

This was very manifest in those ages ; for scarce had the Romans subjected the Carthaginians, but they immediately invaded other nations, and appeared in all parts of the earth, carrying on an universal invasion.

There were at that time in the east but four powers capable of making head against the Romans; Greece, the kingdoms of Macedonia, Syria, and Egypt: we must take a view of the condition, at that time, of the two first of those powers; because the Romans began by subjecting them.

There were three considerable people in Greece, the Ætolians, the Achaïans, and the Bœotians; these were so many associations formed by free cities, which had their general assemblies and magistrates in common. The Ætolians were martial, bold, rash; greedy of gain, very lavish of their promises and oaths; in fine, a people who warred on land in the same manner as pirates do at sea. the Achaïans were incommoded perpetually by troublesome neighbours or defenders. The Bœotians, who were the most heavy people of all Greece, but at the same time the wisest, lived generally in peace; guided entirely by a sensation of happiness and misery, they had not genius enough to be either roused or misguided by orators. What is most extraordinary, their republic subsisted even in the midst of anarchy.

Lacedæmon had preserved its power, by which I mean that warlike spirit which the institutions of Lycurgus inspired. The Thessalians were, in some measure, enslaved by the Macedonians. The Illyrian kings had already been very much depressed by the Romans. The Acarnanians and Athamanes had been cruelly invested by the troops of Macedon and Ætolia successively. The Athenians, weak in themselves and unsupported by allies, no longer astonished the world, except by the flatteries they lavished on kings; and the orators no more ascended the rostra where Demosthenes had harangued, unless to propose the basest and most scandalous decrees.

Besides, Greece was formidable from its situation, its strength, the multitude of its cities, the great number of its soldiers, its polity, manners, and laws; the Greeks delighted in war; they knew the whole art of it; and, had they united, would have been invincible.

They indeed had been terrified by the first Philip, by Alexander, and by Antipater, but not subdued; and the

Kings of Macedon, who could not prevail with themselves to lay aside their pretensions and their hopes, made the most obstinate attempts to enslave them.

The greatest part of Macedonia was surrounded with inaccessible mountains ; the inhabitants of it were formed by nature for war ; courageous, obedient, industrious, and indefatigable ; and these qualities must necessarily have been owing to the climate, since the natives of it are, to this day, the best soldiers in the Turkish empire.

Greece maintained itself by a kind of balance : the Lacedæmonians were generally in alliance with the Ætolians, and the Macedonians with the Achaïans ; but the arrival of the Romans quite destroyed the equilibrium.

As the kings of Macedonia were not able to maintain a large body of troops, the least loss was of consequence to them ; besides, it was difficult for these monarchs to aggrandize themselves ; because, as their ambitious views were not unknown, other nations kept a watchful eye over every step they took ; and the successes they obtained in the wars undertaken for the sake of their allies, was an evil which these very allies endeavoured immediately to remedy.

But the kings of Macedonia generally possessed great talents ; their monarchy was not like those which proceeded for ever in the same steps that were taken at the foundation of them ; instructed perpetually by dangers and experience, involved in all the disputes of Greece, it was necessary for them either to bribe the principal magistrates of cities, to raise a mist before the eyes of nations, or to divide or unite their interests ; in a word, they were obliged, to expose every moment, their persons to the greatest dangers.

Philip, who in the beginning of his race had won the love and confidence of the Greeks by his moderation, changed on a sudden ; he became a cruel tyrant, at a time when he ought to have behaved with justice, both from policy and ambition : he saw, though at a distance, the Romans possessed of numberless forces ; he had concluded the war to the advantage of his allies, and was reconciled to the Ætolians : it was natural he should now endeavour to unite all the Greeks with himself, in order to prevent the Romans from settling in their country ; but so far from this,

he exasperated them by petty usurpations; and trifled away his time in examining affairs of little or no consequence, at a time when his very existence was endangered: by the commission of three or four evil actions, he made himself odious and detestable to all Greece.

The Ætolians were most exasperated, and the Romans snatching the opportunity of their resentment, or rather of their folly, made an alliance with them, entered Greece and armed it against Philip. This prince was defeated at the battle of Cynocephalæ, and the victory was partly gained by the valour of the Ætolians: so much was he intimidated upon this, that he concluded a treaty, which was not so properly a peace, as the renouncing his own strength; for he evacuated his garrisons in all Greece, delivered up his ships, and bound himself under an obligation of paying a thousand talents in ten years.

Polybius compares, with his usual good sense, the disposition of the Roman armies with that of the Macedonians, which was observed by all the kings who succeeded Alexander: he points out the conveniencies, as well as inconveniencies, of the phalanx and of the legion: he prefers the disposition used by the Romans, in which he very probably was right, since all the battles fought at that time show it to have been preferable.

A circumstance which had contributed very much to the danger to which the Romans were exposed in the second Punic war, was Hannibal's presently arming his soldiers after the Roman manner; but the Greeks did not change either their arms or their way of fighting; and could not prevail with themselves to lay aside customs, by the observance of which they had performed such mighty things.

The success which the Romans obtained over Philip, was the greatest step they ever took towards a general conquest: to make sure of Greece, they employed all methods possible to depress the Ætolians, by whose assistance they had been victorious: they ordained, moreover, that every city of Greece which had been subject to Philip, or any other sovereign prince, should from that time be governed by its own laws.

It is very evident, that these petty commonwealths must

necessarily be dependent : the Greeks abandoned themselves to a stupid joy, and fondly imagined they were really free, because the Romans had declared them to be so.

The Ætolians, who had imagined they should bear sway in Greece, finding they had only brought themselves under subjection, were seized with the deepest grief ; and as they had always formed desperate resolutions, they invited, in order to correct one extravagance by another, Antiochus king of Syria into Greece, in the same manner as they had before invited the Romans.

The kings of Syria were the most powerful of all Alexander's successors, they being possessed of almost all the dominions of Darius, Egypt excepted ; but by the concurrence of several circumstances, their power had been much weakened. Seleucus, who founded the Syrian empire, had destroyed, towards the latter end of his life, the kingdom of Lysimachus. During the feuds and distractions, several provinces took up arms ; the kingdom of Pergamus, of Capadocia, and of Bithynia started up ; but these petty, fearful states, always considered the depression of their former masters as the making of their own fortune.

As the kings of Syria always beheld, with a most invidious eye, the felicity of the kingdom of Egypt, they bent their whole thoughts to the conquest of that country ; by this means, neglecting the east, they were dispossessed of several provinces there, and but indifferently obeyed in the rest.

In fine, the kings of Syria possessed upper and lower Asia ; but experience has shewn, that in this case, when the capital city and the chief forces are in the lower provinces of Asia, there is no possibility of maintaining the upper ones ; and on the contrary, when the seat of the empire is in the upper provinces, the monarch weakens himself by maintaining the lower ones. Neither the Persian nor Syrian empires were ever so powerful as that of the Parthians, though these reigned over but part of the provinces which formed the dominions of those two powers. Had Cyrus not conquered the kingdom of Lydia, had Seleucus continued in Babylon, and let the successors of Antigonus possess the maritime provinces, the Greeks

would never have conquered the Persian empire, nor the Romans that of Seleucus. Nature has prescribed certain limits to states, purposely to mortify the ambition of mortals: when the Romans stepped beyond those limits, the greatest part of them were destroyed by the Parthians; when the Parthians presumed to pass them, they were forced immediately to retire back: and in our days, such Turks as advanced beyond those boundaries, were obliged to return whence they came.

The kings of Syria and Egypt had, in their respective dominions two kinds of subjects, victorious nations, and nations vanquished; the former still puffed up with the idea of their origin, were ruled with very great difficulty: they were not fired with that spirit of independence which animates us to shake of the yoke, but with that impatience which makes us wish to change our sovereign.

But the chief weakness of the kingdom of Syria sprung from that of the court, where such monarchs presided as were successors to Darius, not to Alexander. Luxury, vanity, and effeminacy, which had prevailed through all ages in the Asiatic courts, triumphed more particularly in that of Syria: the evil infected the common people and the soldiers, and even influenced the Romans themselves; since the war in which they engaged against Antiochus, is the true era of their corruption.

Such was the condition of the kingdom of Syria, when Antiochus, who had performed such mighty things, declared war against the Romans; but he did not conduct himself in it with the wisdom which is even employed in common affairs: Hannibal requested either to have the war revived in Italy, and Philip bribed; or else, that he might be prevailed upon to stand neutral. Antiochus did not follow any part of this advice: he appeared in Greece with only a small part of his forces; and as though he were come merely to see the war, not to carry it on, he followed nothing but his pleasures, by which means he was defeated, and fled out of Asia, terrified rather than conquered.

Philip, who was dragged to this war by the Romans, as though a flood had swept him along, employed his whole power in their service, and became the instrument of their

victories: the pleasure of taking vengeance of, and laying waste *Ætolia*; the promise made him of lessening the tribute he paid, and of leaving him the possession of certain cities; some personal jealousy of *Antiochus*; in a word, a few inconsiderable motives swayed his resolutions; and not daring so much as to think of shaking off the yoke, he only considered how he might best lighten it.

Antiochus formed so wrong a judgment of things, as to fancy that the Romans would not molest him in *Asia*; however, they followed him thither; he was again overcome, and, in his consternation, consented to the most infamous treaty that ever was concluded by so mighty a prince.

I cannot recollect any thing so magnanimous, as a resolution taken by a monarch in our days, to bury himself under the ruins of the throne, rather than accept of terms unworthy of a king: so haughty was his soul, that he could not stoop lower than his misfortunes had thrown him; and he was very sensible, that courage may, but infamy never can, give fresh strength to the regal diadem.

We often meet with princes who have skill enough to fight a battle, but with very few that have the talents requisite for carrying on a war; who are equally capable of making a proper use of fortune, and of waiting for her, and who join to a frame of mind, which raises suspicions, before it executes, such a dissolution as makes them fearless after they have once executed.

After the depression of *Antiochus*, only some inconsiderable powers remained, if we except *Egypt*, which, from the advantage of its situation, its fertility, its commerce, the great number of its inhabitants, its naval and land forces, might have been formidable; but the cruelty of its kings, their cowardice, their avarice, their imbecility, and their enormous sensualities, made them so odious to their subjects, that they supported themselves, for the most part, by the protection of the Romans.

It was a kind of fundamental law, with regard to the crown of *Egypt*, that the sisters should succeed with the brothers; and in order to preserve unity in the government, the brother was married to the sister. Now, it is scarce possible to figure anything more pernicious in politics than

such an order of succession ; for as all the little domestic feuds rose so high as to disorder the state, whichever of the two parties had the least discontent, immediately excited against the other the inhabitants of Alexandria, a numberless multitude, always prepared to join with the first of their kings who should rouse them ; so that there were for ever princes who actually reigned, and pretenders to the crown. And as the kingdoms of Cyrene and Cyprus were generally possessed by other princes of that house, who laid their respective claims to the whole ; by that means, the throne of these princes was ever tottering ; and being indifferently settled at home, they had no power abroad.

The forces of the kings of Egypt, like those of the Asiatic monarchs, were composed of auxiliary Greeks. Besides the spirit of liberty, of honour, and of glory, which animated the latter people, they were incessantly employed in bodily exercises of every kind. In all their chief cities, games were instituted, wherein the victors were crowned in the presence of all Greece, which raised a general emulation. Now, in an age when the combatants fought with arms, the success of which depended on their strength and dexterity, it is natural to suppose that men thus exercised must have had a great advantage over a crowd of barbarians, who were enlisted at random and dragged indiscriminately into the field, as was evident from the armies of Darius.

The Romans, in order to deprive the kings of such a body of soldiery, and to bereave them, but in an easy, silent manner, of their principal forces, observed two things : first, they established, by insensible degrees, as a maxim, with respect to all the cities of Greece, that they should not conclude any alliance, give any succour, or make war against any nation whatsoever, without their consent : secondly, in their treaties with kings, they forbade them to levy any forces from among the allies of the Romans, by which means, those monarchs were reduced to employ their national troops only.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CONDUCT WHICH THE ROMANS OBSERVED, IN ORDER
TO SUBDUE ALL NATIONS.

During the course of so mighty a prosperity, in which it is usual for mankind to forget themselves, the senate continued to act with the same depth of judgment; and whilst their armies were spreading an universal terror, they would not suffer those to rise who were once depressed.

A tribunal arose which judged all nations: at the close of every war they determined the rewards or punishments which every one had merited: they took away from the vanquished people, part of their lands, and gave them to their allies, in which they did two things; they engaged, in the interests of Rome, princes from whom they had little to fear, and much to hope; and they weakened others from whom they had nothing to hope, and everything to fear.

In warring with an enemy they made use of their allies, but immediately extirpated the destroyers. Philip was overcome by the assistance of the Ætolians, who were destroyed presently after, for having joined themselves to Antiochus. This king was overcome by the assistance of the Rhodians; but after the most conspicuous rewards had been bestowed upon them, they were depressed for ever, upon pretence that they had demanded to have a peace concluded with Perseus.

When the Romans were opposed by several enemies at the same time, they granted a truce to the weakest, who thought themselves happy in obtaining it: considering it as a great advantage, that their ruin had been suspended.

When they were engaged in a mighty war, the senate winked at wrongs of every kind, and silently waited the the season proper for chastisement: if at any time a people sent them the offenders, they refused to punish them, choosing rather to consider the whole nation as guilty, and reserve to themselves a useful vengeance.

As they made their enemies suffer inexpressible evils, very few leagues were formed against them ; for he who was at the greatest distance from the danger, did not care to come near it.

For this reason war was seldom denounced against them, but themselves always made it at a season, in the manner and with a people, as best suited their interest ; and among the great number of nations they invaded, there were very few but would have submitted to injuries of every kind provided they could but be suffered to live in peace.

As it was usual for them to deliver themselves always in a magisterial way, such ambassadors as they sent to nations who had not yet felt the weight of their power, were sure to meet with ill-treatment, which furnished them with a sure pretence to engage in a new war.

As they never concluded a peace with sincerity and integrity, and intended a general invasion, their treaties were properly only so many suspensions from war ; they inserted such conditions in them, as always paved the way to the ruin of those states which accepted them : they used to send the garrisons out of the strongholds : they regulated the number of the land forces, or had the horses and elephants delivered up to them ; and in case this people were powerful at sea, they obliged them to burn their ships, and sometimes to remove higher up in the country.

After having destroyed the armies of a prince, they drained his treasury, by imposing a heavy tribute, or taxing him immoderately, under colour of making him defray the expense of the war : a new species of tyranny, which obliged him to oppress his subjects, and thereby lose their affection.

Whenever they granted a peace to some prince, they used to take one of his brothers or children by way of hostage, which gave them an opportunity of raising, at pleasure, commotions in his kingdom : when they had the next heir among them, it was their custom to intimidate the possessor : had they only a prince of a remote degree, they made use of him to foment the insurrections of the populace.

Whenever any prince or people withdrew their allegiance

from their sovereign, they immediately indulged them with the title of ally to the Romans : by which means they became sacred and inviolable : so that there was no monarch, how formidable soever, who could rely one moment upon his subjects, or even upon his own family.

Although the title of their ally was of a kind of servitude, yet was it very much sought after ; for those who enjoyed it were sure to receive no injuries but from them ; and had reason to flatter themselves such would be less grievous. Hence nations and kings were ready to undertake any kind of services, and submitted to the meanest and most abject acts, merely for the sake of obtaining it.

They had various kinds of allies ; some were united to them by privileges and participation in their grandeur, as the Latins and the Hernici ; others by their very settlements, as their colonies ; some by good offices, as Masinissa, Eumenes, and Attalus, who were obliged to them for their kingdoms or their exaltation ; others by free and unconstrained treaties, and these, by the long continuation of the alliance, became subjects, as the kings of Egypt, Bithynia, Capadocia, and most of the Grecian cities ; in fine, many by forced and involuntary treaties, and by the law of their subjection, as Philip and Antiochus ; for every peace the Romans granted an enemy, included also an alliance with him ; or, in other words, they made every nation subdued by them contribute to the depression of others.

When they permitted any cities the enjoyment of their liberties, they immediately raised two factions in them, one of which defended the laws and liberties of the country, whilst the other asserted that the will of the Romans was the only law ; and as the latter faction was always the most powerful, it is plain such a liberty could be but a mere name.

They sometimes possessed themselves of a country upon a pretence of being heirs to it ; they entered Asia, Bithynia, and Lybia by the last wills of Attalus, of Nicomedes, and of Appion ; and Egypt was enslaved by that of the king of Cyrene.

To keep great princes for ever in a weak condition, they would not suffer them to conclude an alliance with those

nations to whom they had granted theirs ; and as they did not refuse it to any people who bordered upon a powerful prince, this condition inserted in a treaty of peace, deprived him of all his allies.

Besides, when they had overcome any considerable prince, one of the articles of the treaty was, that he should not make war, upon account of any feuds of his own, with the allies of the Romans (that is to say, generally with all his neighbours), but should submit them to arbitration ; which deprived him of a military power for time to come.

And in order to keep the sole possession of it in their own hands, they bereaved their very allies of this force ; the instant these had the least contest, they sent ambassadors, who obliged them to conclude a peace : we need but consider the manner in which they terminated the wars of Attalus and Prusias.

When any prince had gained such a conquest as often had exhausted him, immediately a Roman ambassador came and wrested it out of his hands ; among a multitude of examples, we may remember how they, with a single word, drove Antiochus out of Egypt.

Fully sensible how well the European nations were turned for war, they established as a law, that no Asiatic monarch should be suffered to come into Europe, and there invade any people whatsoever. The chief motive of their declaring war against Mithridates was, for his having subdued some barbarians contrary to his prohibition.

When they saw two nations engaged in war, although they were not in alliance, nor had any contest with either of them, they nevertheless appeared upon the stage of action, and like our knight-errants, always sided with the weakest ; it was an ancient custom, says Dionysius Halicarnasseus, for the Romans to grant succour to all who came to implore it.

These customs of the Romans were not certain particular incidents which happened by chance, but were so many invariable principles ; and this is easy to perceive, for the maxims they put in practice against the greatest monarchs were exactly the same with those they had employed,

in their infant state, against the little cities which stood round them.

They made Eumenes and Masinissa contribute to the subjection of Philip and Antiochus, as they had before employed the Latins and the Hernici to subdue the Volscians and the Tuscans; they obliged the Carthaginians and the kings of Asia to surrender their fleets to them, in like manner as they had forced the citizens of Antium to give up their little vessels.

When any state composed too formidable a body from its situation or union, they never failed to divide it. The republic of Achaia was formed by an association of free cities; the senate declared that every city should from that time be governed by its own laws, independent on the general authority.

The commonwealth of Bœotia rose likewise from a league made between several cities; but, as in the war of Perseus, one city declared for that prince, and others for the Romans, the latter received them into favour, when the common alliance was dissolved.

Macedonia was surrounded by inaccessible mountains; the senate divided it into four parts; declared those free; prohibited them every kind of alliance among themselves by marriage; carried off all the nobles into Italy, and by that means reduced this power to nothing.

Had a great monarch, who reigned in our time, followed these maxims, when he saw a neighbouring prince dethroned, he would have employed a stronger force in his support, and have confined him to the island which continued faithful to him. By dividing the only power that could have opposed his designs, he would have drawn infinite advantages even from the misfortunes of his ally.

Whenever there happened any feud in a state, they immediately made themselves judges of it; and thereby were sure of having that party only, whom they condemned, for their enemy. If princes of the same blood were at variance for the crown, they sometimes declared them both kings, and by this means crushed the power of both; if one of them was a minor, they declared in his favour, and made themselves his guardians in quality of protectors of the

world ; for they had carried matters to so high a pitch, that nations and kings were their subjects, without knowing directly upon what right or title ; it being a maxim, that the bare hearing of their names, was sufficient for a people to acknowledge them their sovereigns.

The Romans never engaged in far distant wars, till they had first made an alliance with some power contiguous to the enemy they invaded, who might unite his troops to the army they sent ; and as this was never considerable with regard to numbers, they always had another in that province which lay nearest the enemy, and a third in Rome, ever ready to march at a moment's warning. In this manner they never hazarded but a small part of their forces, whilst their enemy ventured all his.

They sometimes insidiously perverted the subtilty of the terms of their language : they destroyed Carthage, upon pretence that they had promised to preserve the *Civitas* not the *Urbs*. It is well known in what manner the *Ætolians*, who had abandoned themselves to their faith, were imposed upon ; the Romans pretended, that the signification of these words, *abandon one's self to the faith of an enemy*, implied, the loss of all things, of persons, lands, cities, temples, and even of burial-places.

The Romans would even go so far, as to give arbitrary explanations to treaties : thus, when they were resolved to depress the *Rhodians*, they declared, that they had formerly given them *Lycia*, not by way of present, but as a friend and ally.

When one of their generals concluded a peace, merely to preserve his army, which was just upon the point of being cut to pieces, the senate, who did not ratify it, took advantage of this peace and continued the war. Thus when *Jugurtha* had surrounded an army of Romans, and permitted them to march away unmolested, upon the faith of a treaty, these very troops he had saved were employed against him : and when the *Numantians* had reduced twenty thousand Romans, just perishing with hunger, to the necessity of suing for peace ; this peace, which had saved the lives of so many thousand citizens, was broke at Rome, and the public faith was eluded by sending back the consul who had signed it.

They sometimes would conclude a peace with a monarch upon reasonable conditions, and the instant he had signed them, they added others of so injurious a nature, that he was forced to renew the war. Thus, when they had forced Jugurtha to deliver up his elephants, his horses, his treasures, and his deserters, they required him to surrender up his person, which being the greatest calamity that can befall a prince, cannot for that reason be ever made an article of peace.

In fine, they set up a tribunal over kings, whom they judged for their particular vices and crimes; they heard the complaints of all persons who had any dispute with Philip; they sent deputies with them by way of safeguard, and obliged Perseus to appear before these, to answer for certain murders and certain quarrels he had with some inhabitants of the confederate cities

As men judged of the glory of a general by the quantity of the gold and silver carried in his triumph, the Romans stripped the vanquished enemy of all things. Rome was for ever enriching itself; and every war they engaged in, enabled them to undertake a new one.

All the nations who were either friends or confederates, quite ruined themselves by the immensely rich presents they made, in order to procure the continuance of the favours already bestowed upon them, or to obtain greater; and half the monies which used to be sent upon these occasions to the Romans would have sufficed to conquer them.

Being masters of the universe, they arrogated to themselves all the treasures of it: and were less unjust robbers, considered as conquerors, than considered as legislators. Hearing that Ptolemy, King of Cyprus, was possessed of immense wealth, they enacted a law, proposed by a tribune, by which they gave to themselves the inheritance of a man still living, and confiscated to their own use the estates of a confederate prince.

In a little time the greediness of particular persons quite devoured whatever had escaped the public avarice; magistrates and governors used to sell their injustice to kings; two competitors would ruin one another, for the sake of

purchasing an ever-dubious protection against a rival who was not quite undone ; for the Romans had not even the justice of robbers, who preserve a certain probity in the exercise of guilt. In fine, as rights, whether lawful or usurped, were maintained by money only ; princes, to obtain it, despoiled temples, and confiscated the possessions of the wealthiest citizens ; a thousand crimes were committed, purely for the sake of giving to the Romans all the money in the universe.

But nothing was of greater advantage to this people than the awe with which they struck the whole earth : in an instant, kings were put to silence, and seemed as though they were stupid ; no regard was had to their eminence, but their very persons were attacked ; to hazard a war was to expose themselves to captivity, to death, to the infamy of a triumph. Thus kings, who lived in the midst of pomps and pleasures, did not dare to fix their eyes steadfastly on the Roman people ; and their courage failing them, they hoped to suspend a little the miseries with which they were threatened, by their patience and submissive actions.

Observe, I entreat you, the conduct of the Romans. After the defeat of Antiochus they were possessed of Africa, Asia, and Greece, without having scarce a single city in these countries that were immediately their own. They seemed to conquer with no other view but to bestow ; but then they obtained so complete a sovereignty, that whenever they engaged in war with any prince, they oppressed him, as it were, with the weight of the whole universe.

The time proper for seizing upon the conquered countries was not yet come ; had the Romans kept the cities they took from Philip, the Greeks would have seen at once into their designs ; had they, after the second Punic war, of that with Antiochus, possessed themselves of lands in Africa and in Asia, they could never have preserved conquests so slightly established.

It was the interest of the Romans to wait till all nations were accustomed to obey, as free and as confederate, before they should attempt to command over them as subjects ; and to let them blend and lose themselves, as it were, by little and little, in the Roman commonwealth.

See the treaty which they made with the Latins after the victory at the lake of Legilus. This was one of the principal foundations of their power, yet not a single word occurs in it, which can give the least suspicion that they aimed at empire.

This was a slow way of conquering : after overcoming a nation, they contented themselves with weakening it ; they imposed such conditions as consumed it insensibly ; if it recovered, they depressed it still more, and it became subject, without a possibility of dating the first era of its subjection.

Thus Rome was not properly either a monarchy or a commonwealth, but the head of a body composed of all the nations in the universe.

Had the Spaniards, after the conquest of Mexico and Peru followed this plan, they would not have been obliged to destroy all, for the sake of preserving all.

It is a folly in conquerors to force their own laws and customs on all nations ; such conduct is of very ill consequence, for men are capable of obeying under all kinds of government.

But as Rome did not impose any general laws, the nations did not form any dangerous associations ; they formed one body no otherwise than by a common obedience ; and were all Romans without being countrymen.

It perhaps will be objected, that no empires founded on the laws of fiefs were ever durable or powerful. But nothing could be so contradictory as the plan of the Romans and that of the Goths ; and just to mention those plans, the former was a work of strength, the latter of weakness ; in the one, subjection was extreme ; in the other, independence ; in the Gothic states, power was lodged in the vassals, and the right of judging only in the prince ; whereas it was the reverse in the Roman government.

CHAPTER VII.

HOW IT WAS POSSIBLE FOR MITHRIDATES TO RESIST THE ROMANS.

AMONG the several kings whom the Romans invaded, Mithridates was the only one who made a courageous defence, and exposed them to danger.

His dominions were situated to wonderful advantage for carrying on a war with them ; they bordered on the inaccessible countries of mount Caucasus, peopled with savage nations, whom that prince could call to his assistance ; they thence extended along the sea of Pontus, which Mithridates covered with his ships, and he was incessantly purchasing new armies of Scythians : Asia was open to his invasions ; and he was rich, because his cities, situated on the Pontus Euxinus, carried on an advantageous traffic with nations less industrious than themselves.

Proscriptions, the custom of which began at this time, had forced several Romans to leave their country. These were received by Mithridates with open arms, and he formed legions, into which he incorporated those exiles, who proved the best soldiers in the army.

On the other side, the Romans, disordered by intestine divisions, and threatened with more imminent dangers, neglected the affairs of Asia, and suffered Mithridates to pursue his victories, or take breath after his defeats.

Nothing had contributed more to the ruin of most kings, than the manifest desire they showed for peace : by this, they had prevented all other nations from dividing, with them a danger, from which they were so anxious to extricate themselves ; but Mithridates immediately made the whole world sensible that he was an enemy to the Romans, and would be so eternally.

In fine, the cities of Greece and Asia, finding the Roman yoke grow more intolerable every day, reposed their whole confidence in this barbarous king, who invited them to liberty.

This disposition of things gave rise to three mighty wars

which form one of the noblest parts of Roman history, and for this reason : we do not, on this occasion, read of princes already overcome by luxury and pride, as Antiochus and Tigranes ; nor by fear, as Philip, Perseus, and Jugurtha ; but a magnanimous king, who in adversity, like a lion that gazes upon his wounds, was fired with the greater indignation upon that account.

This part of the Roman history is singular, because it abounds with perpetual and ever-unexpected revolutions ; for as on one side, Mithridates could easily recruit his armies, so it appeared that in those reverses of fortune, in which kings stand in greatest need of obedience and a strict discipline, his barbarian forces forsook him : as he had the art of enticing nations, and stirring up cities to rebellion, so was he likewise betrayed by his captains, his children and his wives ; in fine, as he was sometimes opposed by unexperienced Roman generals, so there was sent against him, at other times, Sylla, Lucullus, and Pompey.

This prince, after having defeated the Roman generals, and conquered Asia, Macedonia, and Greece ; having been vanquished, in his turn, by Sylla ; confined by a treaty to his former limits, and harassed by the Roman generals ; having been once more superior to them, and conqueror of Asia ; driven away by Lucullus ; pursued into his own country ; obliged to fly for shelter to Tigranes, and defeated with him ; finding this monarch irrevocably lost, and depending merely upon himself for succour, he took sanctuary in his own dominions, and re-ascended the throne.

Lucullus was succeeded by Pompey, who quite overpowered Mithridates. He then flies out of his dominions, and crossing the *Araxes*, marches from danger to danger through the country of the *Lazi* ; and assembling in his way all the barbarians he met with, appeared in the *Bosphorous* against his son *Macchares*, who had reconciled himself to the Romans.

Although plunged in so deep an abyss, he yet formed a design of making Italy the seat of the war, and of marching to Rome at the head of those nations who enslaved it some years after, and by the same way these now took.

Betrayed by *Pharnaces*, another of his sons, and by an

army terrified at the greatness of his enterprizes and the perils he was going in search of, he died in a manner worthy a king.

It was then that Pompey, in the rapidity of his victories, completed the pompous work of the Roman grandeur : he united to the body of its empire, countries of a boundless extent, which, however, heightened the Roman magnificence rather than increased its power ; and though it appeared by the titles carried in his triumph, that he had increased the revenue of the public treasury above a third, there yet was no augmentation in power, and the public liberty was thereby only exposed to the greater danger.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF THE DIVISIONS WHICH ALWAYS SUBSISTED IN THE CITY.

Whilst Rome was conquering the world, a hidden war was carrying on within its walls : these fires were like those of volcanos, which break out the instant they were fed by some combustile substance.

After the expulsion of the kings, the government became aristocratical : the patrician families only, obtained all the employments and dignities in the state, and consequently all honours civil and military.

The patricians being determined to prevent, if possible, the return of the kings, endeavoured to foment the restless principles which now prevailed in the minds of the people ; but they did more than they would willingly have done : by attempting to inspire them with a hatred for kings, they fired them with an inordinate thirst for liberty. As the royal authority had devolved entirely upon the consuls, the people found they were far from possessing that liberty they were taught to idolise ; they therefore sought for methods by which they might depress the consulate, procure plebian magistrates, and share the curule, or greater employments with the nobles. The patricians were forced to comply with all the demands of the people ; for in a city where poverty was the public virtue, where wealth, that clandestine path to power, was despised, neither birth

nor dignities could bestow any great advantages ; it was therefore necessary for power to fall into the hands of the greater number, and for aristocracy to change, by insensible degrees, into a popular state.

Those who are subordinate to a king, are less tortured with envy and jealousy, than such as live under an hereditary aristocracy ; the prince is at so great a distance from his subjects, that he is scarce seen by them ; and is raised so far above them, that they cannot conceive any relation capable of giving them disgust. But when the nobles preside in a state, they are exposed to the eyes of all men, and are not seated so high as to prevent odious comparisons from being made perpetually ; and, indeed, the people have detested senators, in this and in all ages. Such commonwealths in which birth does not bestow any share in the legislature, are the happiest in this respect ; for it is natural that the people should not bear so much envy to an authority which they bestow on whom they think proper, and resume at will.

The people being disgusted at the patricians, withdrew to the Sacred Hill (Mons Sacra) whither deputies being sent, they were appeased ; and as they all made a promise to assist one another, in case the patricians should not perform their engagement, which would have created seditions every moment, and disturbed all the magistrates in the exercise of their functions ; it was judged better to create an officer who might protect the people against any injustice that should be done them ; but by a malady for ever incident to man, the plebeians, who had obtained tribunes merely for their own defence, employed those very magistrates to annoy others : so that they stript, by insensible degrees, the patricians of all their privileges. This gave rise to everlasting contests : the people were supported, or rather animated, by their tribunes ; and the patricians were defended by the senate, the greatest part of which consisted of patricians, who were more inclined to favour the ancient maxims, and afraid that the populace would raise some tribune to arbitrary power.

The people employed, in the defence of this magistrate, their own strength, and the superiority they had in the

suffrages, their refusal to march into the field, their threats to go quite away, the partiality of the laws, in fine, their judiciary sentences against those who had opposed them too vigorously : the senate defended themselves by their wisdom, their justice, and the love they inspired into all for their country ; by their beneficence, and the prudent distribution of the commonwealth ; by the veneration which the people had for the glory of the principal families, and the virtue of illustrious personages ; by religion itself, the ancient institutions, and the prohibition of days of public meeting, upon pretence that the auspices had not been favourable ; by their clients ; by the opposition of one tribune to another ; by the creation of a dictator, the occupations of a new war, or the misfortunes and calamities which united all parties ; in a word, by a paternal condescension, in granting the people part of their demands, purposely to make them relinquish the rest ; and by that steadfast maxim, of preferring the safety of the republic to the prerogatives of any order or public employment whatsoever.

In process of time, when the plebeians had depressed the patricians to such a degree, that this distinction of families was empty and fruitless, and that both were indiscriminately raised to honours, new contests arose between the populace, whom their tribunes spirited up, and the chief families, whether patricians or such plebeians as were stiled noble, and were favoured by the senate that was composed of them : but, as the ancient manners subsisted no more ; as particular persons were possessed of immense wealth, and that it is impossible but wealth must give power ; those nobles made a stronger resistance than the patricians had done, which occasioned the death of the Gracchi, and of several persons who followed their plan.

I must take notice of an office which contributed greatly to the happy polity of Rome ; it was that of the censors. These numbered or surveyed the people : farther, as the strength of the commonwealth consisted in the strictness of discipline, in the severity of manners, and the uninterrupted observation of certain customs ; they corrected such errors and abuses as the legislative power had not foreseen,

or the ordinary magistrate could not punish. Some bad examples are worse than crimes, and a violation of manners has destroyed more states, than the infraction of laws: in Rome, whatever might tend to introduce dangerous novelties, to create a change in the minds or affections of the citizens, and prevent, if I may use the expression, the perpetuity of it; all disorders and tumults, whether public or private, were reformed by the censors; these had authority to expel whomsoever they pleased; the senate could take from a knight the horse maintained for him at the public expense; or degrade a citizen to the rank of such as contributed to the maintenance of the magistrates of the city, without enjoying the privileges of it; in a word, the censors took a view of the actual situation of the republic, and distributed the people among their various tribes in such a manner, as to prevent the tribunes and persons of an aspiring temper from engrossing the suffrages, or the people from abusing their power.

M. Livius degraded the people themselves, and reduced thirty-four tribes out of thirty-five, to the rank of those who had no share in the privileges of the city; for, said this Roman, you first condemned me, and afterwards raised me to the consulate and the censorship; you therefore must either have prevaricated once in punishing me, or twice in creating me consul and afterwards censor.

M. Duronius, tribune of the people, was expelled the senate by the censors, for having annulled, when in office, the law which limits the expenses of feasts.

The following institution was a very wise one; no magistrate could be turned out of his employment, because that would have disturbed the exercise of the public power; and they divested such a man of his order and rank, and deprived, as it were, a citizen of his particular nobility.

Servius Tullius had made the famous division by centuries, which Livy and Dionysius Halicarnasseus have so well explained. He had divided one-hundred and ninety-three centuries into six classes, and in the last century, which of itself formed the sixth class, he placed all the commonalty. This disposition evidently excluded the commonalty from voting; not of right, but in fact. Afterwards it was deter-

mined, that some particular cases excepted, the division of tribes should be followed in voting. There were thirty-five of these tribes, each having their respective vote, four belonging to the city, and thirty-one to the country. The principal citizens, who were all farmers, naturally belonged to the country tribes, and those of the city admitted the commonalty, though these had very little influence in affairs: this was considered as the safety of the republic. And when Fabius replaced in the four city tribes, the commonalty, whom Appius Claudius had dispersed through them all, he acquired by that action the title of Maximus. The censors every five years surveyed the state of the republic, and distributed the people in their several tribes in such a manner, that the tribunes and ambitious might not engross the votes, nor the people abuse their power.

The government of Rome was wonderful in this respect; ever since the foundation of that city, its constitution was such, either from the genius of the people, the strength of the senate, or the authority of certain magistrates, that every abuse of power might always be reformed in it.

Carthage was destroyed, because, when abuses were about to be retrenched, the citizens could not bear the hand even of their Hannibal. Athens fell, because the errors of the people appeared so lovely in their own eyes, that they would not be cured of them; and among us, those Italian republics which boast the perpetuity of their government, ought to boast of nothing but the perpetuity of their abuses: nor, indeed, do they enjoy greater liberty than Rome did under the Decemviri.

The British government is one of the wisest in Europe, because there is a body which examines it perpetually, and is perpetually examining itself: and its errors are of such a nature, as never to be lasting, and are frequently useful by rousing the attention.

In a word, a free government, that is to say, one for ever in motion, cannot support itself, unless its own laws are capable of correcting the disorders of it.

CHAPTER IX.

TWO CAUSES WHICH DESTROYED ROME.

WHILST the sovereignty of Rome was confined to Italy, it was easy for the commonwealth to submit; every soldier was at the same time a citizen; every consul raised an army, and other citizens marched into the field under his successor; as their forces were not very numerous such persons only were received among the troops, as had possessions considerable enough to make them interested in the preservation of the city: the senate kept a watchful eye over the conduct of the generals, and did not give them an opportunity of machinating any thing to the prejudice of their country.

But after the legions had passed the Alps and crossed the sea, the soldiers, whom the Romans had been obliged to leave during several campaigns in the country they were subduing, left insensibly that genius and turn of mind which characterised a Roman citizen: and the generals, having armies and kingdoms at their disposal, were sensible of their own strength, and could no longer obey.

The soldiers therefore began to acknowledge no superior but their general: to found their hopes on him only, and to view the city as from a distance: they were no longer the soldiers of the republic, but of Sylla, of Marius, of Pompey, and of Cæsar. The Romans could no longer tell, whether the person who headed an army in a province was their general or their enemy.

So long as the people of Rome were corrupted by their tribunes only, on whom they could bestow nothing but their power, the senate could easily defend themselves, because they acted consistently and with one regular tenor: whereas the common people were continually shifting from the extremes of fury to the extremes of cowardice: but when they were enabled to invest their favourites with a formidable exterior authority, the whole wisdom of the senate was baffled, and the commonwealth was undone.

The reason why free states are not so permanent as

other forms of government, is, because the misfortunes and successes which happen to them, generally occasion the loss of liberty ; whereas the successes and misfortunes of an arbitrary government contribute equally to the enslaving of the people. A wise republic ought not to run any hazard which may expose it to good or ill-fortune ; the only happiness the several individuals of it should aspire after, is to give a perpetuity to their state.

If the unbounded extent of the Roman empire proved the ruin of the republic, the vast compass of the city was not less fatal to it.

The Romans had subdued the whole universe by the assistance of the nations of Italy, on whom they had bestowed various privileges at different times ; most of those nations did not, at first, set any great value on the freedom of the city of Rome, and some chose rather to preserve their ancient usages ; but when this privilege became that of universal sovereignty ; when a man, who was not a Roman citizen, was considered as nothing, and, with this title, was all things, the people of Italy resolved either to be Romans or die ; not being able to obtain this by cabals and intreaties they had recourse to arms ; and rising in all that part of Italy opposite to the Ionian sea, the rest of the allies were going to follow their example. Rome being now forced to combat against those who were, if I may be allowed the figure, the hands with which they shackled the universe, was upon the brink of ruin : the Romans were going to be confined merely to their walls ; they therefore granted this so much wished-for privilege to allies who had not yet been wanting in fidelity ; and they indulged it, by insensible degrees, to all other nations.

But now Rome was no longer that city, the inhabitants of which had breathed one and the same spirit, the same love for liberty, the same hatred of tyranny : a city in which a jealousy of the power of the senate and of the prerogatives of the great (ever accompanied with respect) was only a love of equality. The nations of Italy, being made citizens of Rome, every city brought thither its genius, its particular interests, and its dependance on some mighty protector : Rome being now rent and divided, no longer formed one

entire body, and men were no longer citizens of it, but in a kind of fictitious way ; as they were no longer the same magistrates, the same walls, the same gods, the same temples, the same burying-places ; Rome was no longer beheld with the same eyes ; the citizens were no longer fired with the same love to their country, and the Roman sentiments were obliterated.

Cities and nations were now invited to Rome by the ambitious, to disconcert the suffrages or influence them in their own favour ; the public assemblies were so many conspiracies against the state, and a tumultuous crowd of seditious wretches were dignified with the title of Comitia. The authority of the people and their laws, nay that people themselves, were more than so many chimeras, and so universal was the anarchy of those times, that it was not possible to determine whether the people had made a law or not.

Authors enlarge very copiously on the divisions which proved the destruction of Rome ; but their readers seldom discover those divisions to have been always necessary and inevitable. The grandeur of the republic was the only source of that calamity, and exasperated popular tumults into civil wars. Dissentions were not to be prevented, and those martial spirits, which were so fierce and formidable abroad, could not be habituated to any considerable moderation at home. Those who expect in a free state to see the people undaunted in war and pusillanimous in peace, are certainly desirous of impossibilities ; and it may be advanced as a general rule, that whenever a perfect calm is visible, in a state that calls itself a republic, the spirit of liberty no longer subsists.

Union, in a body politic, is a very equivocal term ; true union is such a harmony as makes all the particular parts as opposite as they may seem to us, concur to the general welfare of the society, in the same manner as discords in music contribute to the general melody of sound. Union may prevail in a state full of seeming commotions ; or, in other words, there may be a harmony from whence results prosperity, which alone is true peace, and may be considered in the same view, as the various parts of this

universe, which are eternally connected by the action of some and the reaction of others.

In a despotic state indeed, which is every government where the power is immoderately exerted, a real division is perpetually kindled. The peasant, the soldier, the merchant, the magistrate, and the grandee have no other conjunction than what arises from the ability of the one to oppress the other without resistance; and if at any time a union happens to be introduced, citizens are not then united, but dead bodies are laid in the grave contiguous to each other.

It must be acknowledged that the Roman laws were too weak to govern the republic; but experience has proved it to be an invariable fact that good laws, which raise the reputation and power of a small republic, become incommodious to it, when once its grandeur is established, because it was their natural effect to make a great people, but not to govern them.

The difference is very considerable between good laws, and those which may be called convenient; between such laws as give a people dominion over others, and such as continue them in the possession of power, when they have once acquired it.

There is at this time a republic in the world, of which few persons have any knowledge, and which, by plans accomplished in silence and secrecy, is daily enlarging its power. And certain it is, that if it ever rises to that height of grandeur for which it seems pre-ordained by its wisdom, it must inevitably change its laws, and the necessary innovations will not be effected by any legislator, but must spring from corruption itself.

Rome was founded for grandeur, and its laws had an admirable tendency to bestow it; for which reason, in all the variations of her government, whether monarchy, aristocracy, or popular, she constantly engaged in enterprizes which required conduct to accomplish them, and always succeeded. The experience of a day did not furnish her with more wisdom than all other nations, but she obtained it by a long succession of events. She sustained a small, a moderate, and an immense fortune with the same sup-

eriority, derived true welfare from the whole train of her prosperities, and refined every instance of calamity into beneficial instructions.

She lost her liberty, because she completed her work too soon.

CHAPTER X.

OF THE CORRUPTION OF THE ROMANS.

I AM of opinion that the sect of Epicurus, which began to be propagated at Rome towards the close of the republic, was very prejudicial to the minds and genius of the people. The Greeks had been infatuated with its doctrines long before, and consequently, were corrupted much earlier than the Romans. We are assured by Polybius, that oaths, in his time, could not induce any person to place confidence in a Greek, whereas they were considered by a Roman as inviolable obligations upon his conscience.

There is a passage in one of Cicero's letters to Atticus, which manifestly discovers how much the Romans had degenerated in this particular, since the time of Polybius.

"Memmius," says he, "imparted to the senate the agreement he and his fellow-candidate had made with the consuls, by which the latter stipulated to favour them in their solicitations for the consulship the ensuing year: and they obliged themselves to pay four hundred thousand sesterces to the consuls, if they did not furnish them with three augurs, who should declare they themselves were present when the people made the Curiatian law, though in reality it had not been enacted; and two former consuls, who should affirm they had assisted at signing the edict of the senate which regulated the state of the provinces assigned to the present consuls notwithstanding no such edict was in being." What an admirable set of people we discover in a single contract!

As religion always furnishes the best security for the rectitude of human actions, so there was this peculiarity among the Romans, that the love they expressed for their country was blended with some particular sentiment of devotion. That mighty city, founded in the most auspicious

period ; the great Romulus, at once their monarch and their god ; the capitol, esteemed as eternal as the city ; and the city, reputed as eternal as its founder, had anciently struck such impressions on the minds of the Romans, as might well be wished to have been constantly retained.

The grandeur of the state in general constituted the greatness of its particular members ; but as affluence consists in conduct and not in riches, that wealth of the Romans, which had certain limitations, introduced a luxury and profusion which had no bounds. Those who had been at first corrupted by their opulence, received the same taint in their poverty, by aspiring after acquisitions that no way comported with private life ; it was difficult to be a good citizen, under the influence of strong desires and the regret of a large fortune that had been lost : people, in this situation, were prepared for any desperate attempt ; and, as Sallust says, there was, at that time, a generation of men who, as they had no patrimony of their own, could not endure to see others less necessitous than themselves.

But as great soever as the corruption of Rome might then be, all its calamitous effects were not introduced among the people ; for the efficacy of those institutions, by which they were originally established, was so extraordinary, that they always preserved a heroic fortitude, and devoted themselves with the greatest application to war, amidst all the softenings of luxury and pleasure, which seems to me to be a circumstance in which they were never imitated by any nation in the world.

The Romans were not solicitous to improve commerce, or cultivate the sciences, but ranked them among the attentions proper for slaves ; we may except indeed some particular persons, who had received their freedom and persisted in their former industry. But their knowledge in general was confined to the art of war, which was the only track by which they could arrive at promotions in the magistracy and other stations of honour ; for which reason their military virtues subsisted after all the rest were extinguished.

CHAPTER XI.

OF SYLLA, POMPEY, AND CAESAR.

I ENTREAT the reader's permission to turn my eyes from the horrors of the wars between Marius and Sylla ; Appian has collected all the dreadful particulars into this history : besides the jealousy, ambition, and barbarity of the two chiefs, each particular Roman was infatuated with fury ; the new citizens and the ancient no longer considered each other as members of the same republic, but gave a loose to a series of hostilities so peculiar in their nature as to comprehend all the miseries of a civil and foreign war.

Sylla made several good laws, and reduced the power of the tribunes ; to which we may add that the moderation or caprice which induced him to resign the dictatorship re-established the senate for some time ; but in the fury of his success, he suffered himself to be hurried into actions which in their consequences made it impossible for Rome to preserve her liberty.

In his Asian expedition, he wholly destroyed the military discipline : he accustomed his army to rapine, and taught them wants to which before they were absolute strangers ; he first corrupted the soldiers, who afterwards corrupted their leaders.

He entered Rome with an armed force, and taught the Roman generals to violate the asylum of liberty.

He distributed the lands of the citizens among his soldiers, and by that proceeding corrupted them for ever ; because from that moment there was not one of the military profession who did not wait for an opportunity of seizing the effects of his fellow-citizens.

He was likewise the inventor of proscriptions, and set a price on the head of every man who had not embraced his party. From that time it became impossible for any one to be devoted to the republic, for whilst two ambitious men were contending for superiority, those who observed a neutrality, or were attached to the cause of liberty, were sure to be proscribed by either of the competitors who should

prove victorious ; it therefore became prudent to engage in one of the two parties.

He was succeeded, says Cicero, by a man who in an impious cause, and a victory still more infamous, not only confiscated the effects of individuals, but involved entire provinces in the same calamity.

Sylla, when he abdicated the dictatorship, pretended, that he was unwilling to live in any other manner than under the protection of his own laws ; but that action, which indicated so much moderation, was itself a consequence of his violences. He had given lands to forty-seven legions, in different parts of Italy. These forces, says Appian, regarding their fortune as attached to his life, gave the greatest attention to his safety, and were always ready either to succour or avenge him.

As the republic was fated to destruction, the only material question was, who should have the credit of overwhelming it ?

Two men equally ambitious, with this exception, that the one knew how to proceed directly to his purpose better than the other, eclipsed by their reputation, their exploits, and their virtues, all the rest of the citizens. Pompey made the first appearance in the scene of action, and Cæsar immediately followed him.

Pompey, to render himself popular, had disannulled the law of Sylla, which limited the power of the people, and when he had sacrificed the most salutary laws of his country to his particular ambition, he obtained all he desired, and the rash indiscretion of the populace was altogether unbounded in his favour.

The Roman laws had wisely parcelled out the public power into several magistracies, which mutually supported as well as restrained and tempered each other ; and as the power of all, who enjoyed those promotions was confined to a proper extent, every citizen was qualified for a station of that nature ; and the people, seeing numbers of such persons passing away in succession, were not habituated to any particular magistrate among them. But, in the times we are now describing the plan of government was changed ; the most potent competitors obtained extraordinary commissions

from the people, which annihilated the authority of the magistrates, and drew all the great affairs into the hands of one man, or a few.

Was war to be proclaimed against Sertorius? Pompey was nominated to command the army. Were the Romans to march against Mithridates? Every voice called aloud for Pompey. Did it become necessary to transmit corn to Rome? The people would have given it over for lost, had not Pompey been entrusted with the importation. Were the pirates to be destroyed? Who so proper for that expedition as Pompey? And when Cæsar himself threatened Rome with an invasion, the senators cried out, in their turn, and placed all their confidence in Pompey.

I am willing to believe (said Marcus to the people) that this Pompey, who is so much carressed by the nobility, is more inclinable to secure your liberty than he is to countenance their authority over you; but there was a time when each individual among you was protected by several, and not the whole body of the people by one person: and when it was never known that a single man either gave or took away things of so much consequence.

As Rome was formed for grandeur, it became necessary to unite the honours and power in the same persons, which in unquiet times would fix the admiration of the people on one particular citizen.

When honours are granted the givers know exactly what they bestow; but when power is added to the donation, they can never be certain how far it will be extended.

Immoderate preferences given to a citizen, in a republic, are always productive of necessary effects: they either raise envy in the people, or make their affection overflow all bounds.

When Pompey returned twice to Rome, in a condition to enslave the republic, he had the moderation to disband his armies before he entered the city; and then he made his appearance with the air of a common citizen; these instances of a disinterested behaviour, which completed all his glory, did not fail in their consequences, to make the senate always declare in his favour, whenever he attempted anything prejudicial to the laws.

The ambition of Pompey was more inactive and gentle than that of Cæsar. This warrior resolved, like Sylla, to open himself a passage to sovereign power by arms, but Pompey grew displeased at such a method of oppression ; he aspired, indeed, to the dictatorship, but was willing to owe it to the suffrages of the people ; he could not resolve to usurp power, but would have been glad to have it tendered to him as a gift.

As the favour of the people is always in a fluctuating state, there were some seasons, wherein Pompey beheld his reputation in a declining condition ; and it affected him in the most tender part, to see the very persons he despised, make advances in popularity, and then employ it against him.

This led him into three actions equally fatal ; he corrupted the people with money, and fixed a price, in the elections, on the suffrage of each citizen.

He employed the vilest of the populace to incommode the magistrates in the exercise of their functions, in hopes, that wise people growing weary of living in a state of anarchy, would be urged by despair to create him dictator.

In a word, he united his interests with those of Cæsar and Crassus : Cato said, their union and not their enmity destroyed the republic ; and in reality, it was then reduced to such an unhappy state, that it received less injury from civil wars than by a peace, which, as it united the views and interests of the leading men, so it naturally introduced tyranny in the government.

Pompey did not properly lend his reputation to Cæsar, but sacrificed it to his cause, without knowing what he did ; and Cæsar, in return, employed all the power he had received from Pompey to the prejudice of the donor, and even played off his own artifices against him : he raised troubles in the city by his emissaries ; he made himself master of all elections ; and consuls, prætors, and tribunes purchased their promotions at their own price.

The senate, who easily penetrated into Cæsar's designs, had recourse to Pompey, and entreated him to undertake the defence of the republic, if that name might properly be given to a government which implored protection of one of its citizens.

I am of opinion, that what contributed most to Pompey's destruction, was the shame that affected him, when he grew sensible that by raising Cæsar as he had done, he had committed a fatal oversight ; but he suffered this consideration to prevail as late as possible, and did not prepare for his defence, lest he should be obliged to acknowledge himself in danger. He asserted before the senate that Cæsar durst not engage in a war : and because he had made such a declaration several times, he always persisted in repeating it.

One circumstance seems to have capacitated Cæsar for any undertaking, and that was the unhappy conformity of names ; the senate had added to his government of the Cisalpine Gaul, all that part of Gaul which was distinguished by the name of Transalpine.

As the politics of those times did not permit armies to be stationed near Rome, so neither would they suffer Italy to be entirely destitute of troops ; for which reason considerable forces were quartered in Cisalpine Gaul, a country which extends from the Rubicon, a little river in Roumania, to the Alps : but in order to secure the city of Rome against those troops, the senate passed that famous edict which is still to be seen engraven in the road near Rimini, by which they solemnly devoted to the infernal gods, and branded with sacrilege and parricide any person whatever who should presume to pass the Rubicon with an army, a legion, or a single cohort.

To a government of such importance as to keep the city in awe, another was added which proved still more considerable, and that was all the Transalpine Gaul, which comprehended the southern parts of France, where Cæsar had for several years an opportunity of prosecuting war against as many nations as he pleased ; by which means his soldiers advanced in years as well as himself, and were conquered by him, in their turn, as well as the Barbarians. Had Cæsar not been entrusted with the government of Transalpine Gaul, he could not have corrupted his troops, nor rendered his name venerable to them by so many victories ; and had he not enjoyed Cisalpine Gaul, Pompey might have stopped at the pass of the Alps, whereas he was compelled to retire from Italy when the war began, which made him lose among

his own party that reputation which, in civil wars, is the very soul of power.

The same consternation, which Hannibal diffused through Rome, after the battle of Cannæ, was spread by Cæsar all over that city, when he had passed the Rubicon. Pompey was so confounded that he became incapable, even in the first moments of the war, of forming any design but such as is usually suggested in the most desperate conjunctures. He could only retire, and trust to flight. Accordingly he left Rome and the public treasure ; and as he was in no condition to retard the conqueror, he forsook part of his troops, abandoned all Italy and crossed the sea.

Cæsar's fortune has been greatly celebrated : but this extraordinary man enjoyed so many great qualities, without the intermixture of a defect, though he had several vicious inclinations, that he would have been victorious at the head of any army he had commanded, and would have governed in any republic that had given him birth.

When he had defeated Pompey's lieutenants in Spain, he passed into Greece to seek Pompey himself ; and this general who had possessed himself of the sea-coasts, and was master of a superior force, was on the point of beholding Cæsar's army destroyed by misery and famine. But as the desire of approbation was his predominant frailty, he could not forbear giving attention to some vain speeches of those about him, who were perpetually blaming his conduct, and mortifying him with their jests. This general, says one, would perpetuate his command, and be a new king of kings, like Agamemnon : I assure you, replies another, we shall not eat any Tusculum figs this years. A few encounters in which he had succeeded, quite intoxicated the heads of this senatorial host ; and Pompey, to avoid censure, gave into an indiscretion which posterity will ever blame : he resolved to sacrifice all the advantages he had then obtained, and marched at the head of undisciplined troops to engage an army that had been so frequently victorious.

When the shattered remains of Pharsalia were withdrawn into Africa, Scipio, who then commanded them, refused to follow Cato's advice for protracting the war. He grew elated with a few instances of success ; he risked all,

and immediately lost all he had risked ; and when Brutus and Cassius re-established that party, the same precipitation destroyed the republic a third time.

It is observable, that in the long course of these civil wars, the power of Rome was continually extending in foreign parts, under Marius, Sylla, Pompey, Cæsar, Antony, and Augustus; and that mighty city, growing daily more formidable, completed the destruction of all the kings who presumed to resist her.

No state threatens its neighbours with conquest so much as that which is involved in the horrors of civil war; in such a season, the nobility, the citizens, the artizans, the peasants, and in short, the whole body of the people become soldiers; and when peace has united all the contending parties, this state enjoys great advantages over others whose subjects are generally citizens. Besides civil wars always produce great men, because in the universal confusion which then reigns, those who are distinguished by any particular merit have a favourable opportunity of making themselves conspicuous; each of these persons ranges himself in a suitable situation; whereas, in times of peace, they are stationed by others, and generally very injudiciously. We shall pass from the Romans, and inquire for instances of this truth in nations that are more modern; and among these, France was never so formidable abroad as after the contentions between the houses of Burgundy and Orleans, after the troubles of the league, after the civil wars in the minority of Louis the Thirteenth, and after the national dissensions in the nonage of Louis the Fourteenth. England was never so much respected as in the time of Cromwell, after the wars of the Long Parliament. The Germans, did not gain their superiority over the Turks till after the civil wars of the empire. The Spaniards, under Philip the Fifth, and immediately after the civil wars that were kindled by the succession, invaded Sicily with such a force as astonished all Europe; and we now see the Persians rising from the ashes of a civil war, and humbling the Ottoman power.

In a word, the republic was at last enslaved, and we are not to charge that calamity on the ambition of particular

persons, but should rather impute it to the disposition of man in general, whose cravings after power are always most insatiable, when he enjoys the greatest share and who only desires the whole because he possesses a large part.

If the sentiments of Cæsar and Pompey had resembled those of Cato, others would have had the same ambitious thoughts as Pompey and Cæsar discovered ; and since the republic was fated to fall, it would have been dragged to the precipice by some other hand.

Cæsar pardoned every mortal ; but the moderation people discover when they have usurped all, seems to be no extraordinary accomplishment.

Though he has been commended for being indefatigable, after the battle of Pharsalia, yet Cicero very justly accuses him of remissness. He tells Cassius they never could have imagined Pompey's party would have revived so considerably in Spain and Africa ; and that if they could have foreseen that Cæsar would have amused himself in his Alexandrian war, they would not have made their peace with him as they did, but would have followed Scipio and Cato into Africa. And thus, a weak passion for a woman made him engage in four wars, and by not foreseeing the two last, he hazarded all he had gained at Pharsalia.

Cæsar governed at first under the usual titles of magistracy, for nothing affects mankind more than names ; and as the Asiatics abhorred those of consul and pro-consul, the Europeans detested that of king ; so that those titles constituted at that time the happiness or despair of all the earth. He made some overtures to have the diadem placed on his head ; but when he grew sensible that the people discontinued their acclamations, he thought fit to reject it. He likewise made other attempts, and it is not to be comprehended how he could believe that the Romans, in order to suffer him to be a tyrant, should for that reason be in love with tyranny, or could even give credit to what they themselves had done.

One day, when the senate tendered him some particular honours, he neglected to rise from his seat, and from that moment the gravest members of that body lost all patience.

Mankind are always most offended at any trespass on the ceremonials and punctilios they expect. If you endeavour to oppress them it sometimes passes for a proof of the esteem you entertain for them, but a violation of their decorums is always an instance of contempt.

Cæsar, who was a constant enemy to the senate, could not conceal the mean opinion he entertained of that body, who had almost rendered themselves ridiculous when they were no longer in possession of power; for which reason even his clemency was an insult, and it became evident that he only pardoned because he scorned to punish.

Cæsar formed the edicts of the senate himself, and subscribed them with the names of the first senators he happened to think on. Cicero, in the ninth book of his familiar letters writes to this effect: "I have been sometimes informed that an edict of the senate passed by my consent, has been transmitted to Syria and Armenia, before I had any knowledge that it was made: and several princes have sent me letters of acknowledgment for my consent to allow them the title of kings, when, at the same time, I was so far from knowing them to be kings till that moment, that I even had not heard there were any such persons in the world."

We may see in the letters of some great men of that time, though they passed under Cicero's name, because most of them were written by himself, into what dejection and despair persons of the first rank in the republic were sunk by this sudden revolution, which divested them of their honours and even their employments; when the senate, having no longer any functions to perform, that reputation they had acquired through all the world, was now to be dispensed from the cabinet of one man. This state of affairs appears in a much better light in those letters than in any relations of historians, and they are the most masterly representation of the ingenuous turn of mind of a set of people united by a common affliction, and give us a complete portrait of an age wherein a false politeness had not infected all society with insincerity and untruth. In a word, they are not written like our modern letters, with a view

to deceive, but are the faithful intercourse of friends, who communicated all they knew.

It was hardly possible for Cæsar, in his situation, to preserve his life ; the generality of the conspirators against him, were of his party, or had received many great obligations from him, and the reason of their intention to assassinate him, is very natural ; they had gained signal advantages by his conquest, but the more their fortune improved, the greater was their share of the common calamity, and to those who have not any thing they can properly call their own, it seems, in some particulars, to be of little consequence under what government they live.

Besides, there was a certain law of nations, or a settled opinion which prevailed in all the republics of Greece and Italy, to ascribe the character of a virtuous man to the person who should assassinate any one who had usurped the sovereign power. Rome had been extremely fond of this notion, ever since the expulsion of her kings ; the law was very express ; the examples had a general approbation ; the republic put a sword into the hand of every citizen, constituted him their magistrate for a few moments, and acknowledged him for their defender.

Brutus was bold enough to tell his friends, that, should his own father return from the grave, he would sacrifice him to the public good, with as little remorse as he stabbed Cæsar ; and though, by the continuance of tyranny, this surprising spirit of liberty had gradually lost its vigour, yet the conspiracies, at the beginning of Augustus's reign, were perpetually reviving.

The ancient Romans were animated by a predominant love for their country, which, acting by a variation from the common ideas of crimes and virtues, was only attentive to its own dictates, and in the servors of its operation entirely disregarded friends and citizens, fathers and benefactors. Virtue seemed to have forgotten her own precepts, with a resolution to surpass herself. and when an action seemed too severe to be immediately considered with approbation, she soon caused it to be admired as divine.

In a word, did not the guilt of Cæsar who lived in a free government, consist in placing himself out of the reach of

all punishments but an assassination? And when we ask why he was not opposed by open force, or the power of the laws, do we not at the same time demand satisfaction for his crimes?

CHAPTER XII.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE STATE OF ROME AFTER THE DEATH OF CAESAR.

So impossible was it for the republic to accomplish its re-establishment, that a conjuncture then happened which was never known before; there was no longer any tyrant, and yet liberty was extinguished; for the causes which had contributed to its destruction still subsisted to prevent its revival.

The Assassins had only formed the plan of a conspiracy, but had not taken any measures to render it effectual in the event.

When they had struck the blow, they all retired to the capital; the senate forbore to assemble, and the next day Lepidus, who was fond of commotions, took possession of the Forum, with a band of soldiers at his devotion.

The veteran troops who were apprehensive that the immense donations they had received would be no longer repeated, had marched into Rome; this proceeding compelled the senate to approve all the acts of Cæsar, and then, by a faculty of reconciling extremes, they granted a general amnesty to the conspirators, which produced a false appearance of peace.

Cæsar, a little before his death, whilst he was preparing for his expedition against the Parthians, had appointed magistrates for several years that he might secure himself a set of men who, in his absence, would maintain the tranquility of his government; so that after his death the party who had espoused his interest were in a condition to support themselves for a considerable time.

As the senate had ratified all the acts of Cæsar without any restriction, and as the consuls were intrusted with the execution of them, Antony, who was then one of those magistrates, got possession of Cæsar's book of accounts,

gained upon his secretary, and made him insert in that book all the articles he thought proper, by which means the dictator reigned more imperiously than when he was living ; for what he could never have accomplished, Antony had the dexterity to effect ; great sums of money, which Cæsar would never have bestowed, were distributed among the people by Antony, and every man who had any sedicious designs against the government was sure to find a sudden gratuity in Cæsar's books.

It unfortunately happened that Cæsar to make his expedition effectual, had amassed prodigious sums and deposited them in the temple of Ops ; Antony disposed of these as he thought fit, by the expedient of his book.

The conspirators had, at first, determined to cast the body of Cæsar into the Tiber, and might have executed that design without any interruption : for in those seasons of astonishment which succeed unexpected events, every intention becomes practicable ; this however did not take effect and we shall now relate what happened on that occasion.

The senate thought themselves under a necessity of permitting Cæsar's funeral obsequies to be performed ; and indeed they could not decently forbid them, as they had never declared him a tyrant. Now the Romans, in conformity to a custom established among them, and much boasted of by Polybius, always carried in their funeral processions, the images which represented the ancestors of the deceased, and made an oration over the body. Antony, who charged himself with this last province, unfolded the bloody robe of Cæsar to the view of all the people, read to them the particulars of his will, in which he had left them extraordinary legacies, and then wrought them into such violent emotions that they immediately fired the houses of the conspirators.

Cicero, who governed the senate in this whole affair, makes no scruple to acknowledge that it would have been much better to have proceeded with vigour, and even to have exposed themselves to destruction, though indeed it was not probable that such a fate would have attended them ; but he alleges for his excuse that as the senate was then assembled, they had no opportunity in their favour ; and

he adds, that those who are sensible of the importance even of a moment, in affairs wherein the people have so considerable a part, will not be surprised at his conduct in that transaction.

Another accident happened at this time: when the people were celebrating funeral games in honour of Cæsar, a comet, with long flaming hair, appeared for the space of seven days, which made them believe the soul of Cæsar was received into heaven.

It was very customary for the people of Greece and Asia to erect temples to the kings, and even the pro-consuls who had governed them: and they were indulged in this practice because it was the greatest evidence they could possibly give of their abject servitude. Nay the Romans themselves might, in their private temples, where their lares were deposited, render divine honours to their ancestors; but I cannot remember, that from the time of Romulus to Julius Cæsar, any Roman was ever ranked among the gods of the republic.

The government of Macedonia was assigned to Antony, but he was desirous of changing it for that of Gaul, and the motives which so induced him are very evident: Decimus Brutus, who governed Cisalpine Gaul, having refused to resign that province to Antony, he was resolved to deprive him of it by force. This produced a civil war, in which the senate declared Antony an enemy to his country.

Cicero, to accomplish the destruction of Antony his mortal enemy, was so injudicious as to employ all his interest for the promotion of Octavius, and instead of defacing the idea of one Cæsar in the minds of the people, he placed two before their eyes.

Octavius, in his conduct to Cicero, acted like a man who knew the world; he flattered, he praised, he consulted him, and employed every engaging artifice which vanity never distrusts.

Great affairs are frequently disconcerted, because those who undertake them seldom confine their expectations to the principal event, but look after some little particular success which soothes the indulgent opinion they entertain of themselves.

I am inclined to think, that, if Cato had reserved himself for the republic, he would have given a very different turn to affairs. Cicero had extraordinary abilities for the second class, but was incapable of the first. His genius was fine, but his soul seldom soared above the vulgar. His characteristic was virtue: that of Cato glory. Cicero always beheld himself in the first rank; Cato never allowed his merit a place in his remembrance. This man would have preserved the republic for his own sake; the other that he might have boasted of the action.

I might carry on the parallel by adding, that when Cato foresaw, Cicero was intimidated; and when the former hoped, the latter was confident; Cato beheld things through a serene medium; Cicero viewed them through a glare of little passions.

Antony was defeated at Modena, where the two consuls, Hirtius and Pansa, lost their lives. The senate, who thought themselves superior to their tumultuous affairs began to think of humbling Octavius, who now ceased hostilities against Antony, marched his army to Rome, and caused himself to be declared consul.

In this manner did Cicero, who boasted that his robe had crushed the arms of Antony, introduce an enemy into the republic, the more formidable because his name was much dearer to the people, and his pretensions, to all appearance, better founded.

Antony, after his overthrow, retired into Transalpine Gaul, where he was received by Lepidus. These two men entered into an association with Octavius, and gave up to each other the lives of their friends and their enemies. Lepidus continued at Rome, whilst the other two went in quest of Brutus and Cassius, and found them in those parts where the empire of the world was thrice contended for in battle.

Brutus and Cassius killed themselves with precipitation not to be vindicated; and it is impossible to read this period of their lives, without pitying the republic which was so abandoned. Cato closed the tragedy of his own murder; and these, in some measure, opened it with theirs.

Several reasons may be assigned for this custom of self-

destruction, which so generally prevailed among the Romans; the progress of Stoicism which encouraged; the establishment of triumphs and slavery, which induced several great men to believe they ought not to survive a defeat; the advantages accruing to the accused, who put an end to life rather than submit to a tribunal, which condemned their memory to infamy and their goods to confiscation; a point of honour, more rational perhaps, than which now prompts us to stab our friend for a gesture or an expression; in a word, the convenience of heroism which gave every one the liberty of finishing his part on the stage of the world, in what scene he pleased.

We might add, the great facility of putting such a principle in execution: the soul all attentive to the action she is preparing to commit, to the motives which determine her resolution, to the dangers she avoids by it, does not properly behold death, because passion makes itself felt, but always blinds the eyes.

Self-love, and a fondness for our preservation, changes itself into so many shapes, and acts by such contrary principle, that it leads us to sacrifice our existence for the very sake of existence; and such is the estimate we make of ourselves, that we consent to die by a natural and obscure sort of instinct, which makes us love ourselves even more than our lives.

It is certain that we are become less free, less courageous, and less capable of grand enterprises than we were formerly by this love of ourselves.

CHAPTER XIII.

AUGUSTUS.

SEXTUS POMPEIUS possessed Sicily and Sardinia, was master at sea, and saw himself at the head of a great multitude of fugitives, and persons devoted to death by proscriptions, whose last hopes depended on their valour. Octavius contended with him, in two very laborious wars; and after a variety of ill success, vanquished him by the abilities of Agrippa.

Most of the conspirators ended their lives in a miserable manner ; and it was natural that persons who headed a party, so frequently harassed by wars, in which no quarter was afforded, should die a violent death. That event was, however, interpreted into a consequence of divine vengeance, which punished the murderers of Cæsar, and in its turn proscribed their cause.

Octavius gained over the soldiers of Lepidus to his own interest, and divested him of his power in the triumvirate ; he even envied him the consolation of passing the remainder of his days in obscurity, and compelled him to appear as a private man in the assemblies of the people.

It is impossible for any one to be displeased at the humiliation of this Lepidus ; he was the most depraved citizen in all the republic, a constant promoter of disturbances, and one who perpetually formed fatal schemes, wherein he was obliged to associate with people of more ability than himself. A modern author has thought fit to be large in his commendation, and cites Antony, who, in one of his letters, represents him as an honest man. But he, who had that character from Antony, could not have much title to it from other persons.

I believe Octavius is the only man of all the Roman generals, who ever gained the affections of the soldiers by giving them perpetual instances of a natural timidity of spirit. The soldiers, at that time, were more affected with the liberality of their commanders than their valour ; perhaps it was even fortunate for him that he was not master of any qualities which could procure him the empire, and that his very incapacity should be the cause of his promotion to it, since it made him the less dreaded. It is not impossible that the defects which threw the greatest dishonour on his character, were the most propitious to his fortune. If he had discovered, at first, any traces of an exalted soul, all mankind would have been jealous of his abilities ; and if he had been spirited by any true bravery, he would not have given Antony time to launch into all the extravagances which proved his ruin.

When Antony was preparing to march against Octavius, he assured his soldiers, by a solemn oath, that he would

restore the republic ; which makes it evident, that even they were jealous of the liberty of their country, though they were the perpetual instruments of its destruction ; for an army is the blindest and most inconsiderate set of people in the world.

The battle of Actium was fought, Cleopatra fled, and drew Antony after her. It evidently appeared by the circumstances of her future conduct, that she afterwards betrayed him ; perhaps that incomprehensible spirit of coquetry so predominant in her sex, tempted her to practise all her arts to lay a third sovereign of the world at her feet.

A woman, to whom Antony had sacrificed the whole world, betrayed him ; many captains and kings whom he had raised or made, failed him ; and, as if generosity were connected with servitude, a company of gladiators remained heroically faithful to him. Load a man with benefits, the first idea you inspire him with, is to find ways to preserve them ; they are new interests which you give him to defend.

The most surprising circumstance in those wars is, that one battle should generally decide the difference, and that one defeat should be irreparable.

The Roman soldiers were not, properly, under the prevalence of any party spirit ; they did not fight for any particular acquisition, but for some particular person ; they only knew their commander, who engaged their service by prodigious hopes ; but when he was once defeated, and consequently no longer in a condition to accomplish his promises, they immediately revolted to the other side. The provinces did not embark in the quarrel with any greater sincerity, for it was of little consequence to them, whether the senate or the people prevailed ; and therefore, when one of the generals lost the day, they declared for the other ; for every city was obliged to justify itself before the conqueror, who having engaged himself to the soldiery by immense promises, was constrained to sacrifice to their avidity those countries which were most obnoxious.

We have been afflicted in France, with two sorts of civil wars ; one had religion for its pretext, and was of long duration, because the motive which first inflamed it, continued to subsist after victory ; the other could not properly

be said to have any motive, but was rather kindled by the caprice or ambition of some great men, and was soon extinguished.

Augustus (for that was the name offered by flattery to Octavius) was careful to establish order, or rather a durable servitude ; for when once the sovereignty has been usurped in a free state, every transaction on which an unlimited authority can be founded, is called a regulation ; and all instances of disorder, commotion, and bad government, are represented as the only expedients to preserve the just liberty of the subject.

All the Roman citizens who were ever actuated by ambitious views, have attempted to introduce a kind of anarchy in the republic ; and Pompey, Crassus, and Cæsar, succeeded to a miracle ; they authorized an impunity for all public crimes, and abolished every institution calculated to prevent the corruption of manners, and every regulation accommodated to the best politics ; and as good legislators endeavour to improve their fellow citizens, these, on the contrary, were indefatigable to lead them into a degeneracy from every virtue. With this view they gave sanction to the pernicious custom of corrupting the people by money, and when any persons were accused of undue practices for obtaining places of trust, the delinquents corrupted the judges who were to decide the cause. They interrupted the elections by every violent proceeding, and even intimidated the tribunal itself. The authority of the people was reduced to annihilation, witness Gabanius, who, after he had re-instated Ptolemy, by force of arms, on his throne, contrary to the inclinations of the people, very boldly demanded a triumph.

These leading men in the republic endeavoured to make the people disgusted at their own power, and to become necessary themselves, by rendering the inconveniences of the republican government as disagreeable as possible. But when Augustus had established himself in the supremacy, his politics were employed to restore order, that the people might be sensible of the happiness of being ruled by one man.

When Augustus was at the head of an armed power, he

dreaded the revolt of his soldiers, and not the conspiracies of the citizens ; for which reason he lavished all his carasses on the former, and was altogether inhuman to the latter : but when his arms had accomplished a peace, he was apprehensive of conspiracies, and the idea of Cæsar's untimely death being always present to his remembrance, he resolved to vary from his conduct that he might avoid his fate. We shall now give the reader a complete key to the whole life of Augustus: he wore a coat of mail, under his robe, in the senate house ; he refused the title of dictator ; and whereas Cæsar insolently affirmed the republic to be nothing, and that his words alone were the laws, Augustus was perpetually expatiating on the dignity of senate and his veneration for the republic. He was solicitous therefore to establish such a form of government as should be most satisfactory, without incommoding his particular interest, and changing it into an aristocracy with relation to the civil, and into a monarchy with respect to the military administration ; rendering it by these means an ambiguous system of government which, being unsupported by its own power, could subsist no longer than the sovereign pleased, and consequently was a monarchy in all its circumstances.

A question has been started, whether Augustus had a real inclination to divest himself of the empire. But it is not apparent that, had he been in earnest, he might easily have effected his design ? But his whole proceeding in that affair, was a mere artifice, because, though he expressed a desire every ten years to be eased of the mighty load that encumbered him, yet he always thought fit to bear it. These were little refinements of low cunning, calculated to induce the people to give him what in his opinion he had not sufficiently acquired. I form my thoughts in this particular, by the whole life of Augustus ; and though mankind are frequently fanciful and inconsistent, they are seldom known to renounce, in one moment, any enjoyment that has engaged the attention of all their life. Every action of Augustus, and each of his various regulations, visibly tended to the establishment of monarchy. Sylla resigned the dictatorship ; but amidst all his violent proceedings, a republican spirit is apparent in every part of his conduct ; all his regulations,

though executed with a tyrannical air, had an aspect to some certain form of a commonwealth. Sylla, who was a man of an impetuous temper, precipitated the Romans into liberty. Augustus, who was a smooth and subtle tyrant, led them gently into slavery. When the republic regained its power, under Sylla, all the people exclaimed against tyranny; and whilst this became fortified, under Augustus, liberty was the general boast.

The custom of triumphs, which had so much contributed to the greatness of Rome, was abolished by Augustus, or more properly, this honour became the prerogative of sovereignty. The greatest part of those customs which prevailed under the emperors, derived their origin from the republic; and it will be proper to bring them together that the similitude may be more apparent. That person alone under whose auspices a war had been conducted, was entitled to demand a triumph: now wars were always carried on under the auspices of a generalissimo, and consequently of the emperor, who was the generalissimo of all the forces.

As constant war was the reigning principle of the republic the maxim under the emperors was altogether pacific. Victories were considered as so many opportunities of introducing disorder by armies, who might fix too great a valuation on their services.

Those who were advanced to any command, were apprehensive of engaging in enterprizes of too great importance; they found it necessary to aim at glory with moderation, and were to engage the emperor's notice, and not raise his jealousy: in a word, they were not to appear before him with a lustre which his eyes could not bear.

Augustus was very cautious of investing anyone with the rights of a Roman citizen; he made laws to prevent the enfranchisement of too many slaves, and by his will recommended the observation of these two maxims, with a dissuasive against extending the empire by new wars.

These three particulars were very well connected; for when all war was discontinued, there was no need either of new citizens or enfranchisements.

When Rome was in a constant state of war she was under a perpetual necessity of recruiting her inhabitants. At the

beginning, part of the people were transplanted thither from the conquered cities, and in process of time several citizens of the neighbouring towns came to Rome to obtain a share of the rights of suffrage, and established themselves there in such numbers, that, upon the complaints of the allies, the Romans were obliged to remand them back. Multitudes at last arrived from the provinces: the laws favoured marriages, and even rendered them necessary. Rome, in all her wars, gained a prodigious number of slaves, and when the riches of the citizens became immense, they bought these unhappy people from all parts, and, from a principle of generosity, avarice, or ambition, enfranchised them without number. Some intended by this proceeding to reward the fidelity of their slaves: others had a view by it to receive in their name the corn which the republic distributed among the poor citizens. In a word, others desired to have their funeral solemnity graced with a long train of attendants crowned with flowers. The people were generally composed of persons who had received their freedom, so that the lords of the universe, not only in their original, but through the greatest part of succeeding times, were of servile extraction.

The number of the populace being chiefly collected out of slaves who had been enfranchised, or the sons of such, became very incommodious, and were therefore transplanted into colonies: by which means the state effectually secured the obedience of the provinces. There was a general circulation of mankind through the world. Rome received them in the state of slaves, and sent them away Romans.

Augustus, under the pretence of some tumults in the elections, placed a garrison and a governor in the city, made the legions perpetual, stationed them upon the frontiers, and established particular funds for their pay. To which we may add, that he gave orders for veterans to receive their donations in money, and not in lands.

Many unhappy consequences resulted from the distribution of land after the time of Sylla. The citizens's property in their estates grew precarious, and if all the soldiers of one cohort were not settled in the same place, they became satisfied with their allotments, neglected the cultivation of their lands, and degenerated into dangerous citizens.

But if they were distributed in entire legions, the ambitious could raise armies against the republic in a moment.

Augustus likewise established fixed provisions for the naval power, which was never done before his time ; for as the Romans were masters of the Mediterranean, and as all navigation was then confined to that sea, they had not any enemy to fear.

Dion observes, very judiciously, that after the emperors had assumed the sovereign power, it became very difficult to write the history of these times. All transactions were industriously concealed, the dispatches from the provinces were transmitted to the cabinets of the emperors, and we know little more than what either the folly or rashness of tyrants divulged, or such events as fall within the conjectures of historians.

CHAPTER XIV

TIBERIUS.

As a river sometimes, with a slow and silent progress, undermines the banks that have been thrown up to restrain its current, and at last overwhelms them in a moment, and sheds an inundation over the fields they formerly preserved ; in the same manner, the supreme authority, which gained an insensible growth under Augustus, bore down all before it in the succeeding reign of Tiberius.

A law at that time subsisted, which made it treason to form any injurious attempt against the majesty of the people : Tiberius assumed to himself the interpretation and enforcement of this law, and extended it not only to the cases for which it was originally calculated, but to every conjuncture that could possibly be favourable to his hatred or suspicions. And now, not only actions, but words and signs, and even thoughts were adjudged by this standard : for those expressions which drop from the overflowing of the heart, in the conversation of intimate friends, are always supposed to be their real sentiments. All freedom was therefore banished from their feasts, diffidence reigned

among relations, there was no fidelity among the slaves ; the gloomy disposition and insincerity of the prince were diffused through all ranks of men ; friendship had the disrepute of a dangerous quicksand ; a fine genius passed for a shining indiscretion, and virtue itself was only considered as an affectation, which officiously reminded the people of their lost happiness.

No tyranny can have a severer effect than that which is exercised under the appearance of laws, and with the plausible colours of justice ; when the executors of cruel power would, if we may use the expression, drown the unhappy wretches on the very plank that before saved them amidst the troubled waves.

As a tyrant is never destitute of instruments to accomplish his designs, so Tiberius always found the senate tractable enough to condemn as many persons as he could possibly suspect ; and this venerable body sunk at last into a degeneracy too low to be described. The senators even courted servitude, to gain the favour of Sejanus ; and the most illustrious among them abandoned themselves to the dishonourable profession of informers.

It seems easy to discover several causes of that slavish disposition which then prevailed in the senate. When Cæsar had entirely crushed the party who declared for the republic, all the friends as well as enemies he then had in the senate concurred with equal unanimity to remove the bounds with which the laws had limited his power, and at the same time they agreed to render him unparalleled honours ; some came into these compliances with a view to please him ; others intended by such means to make him odious. Dion informs us that some even proposed that he might have the liberty to enjoy as many women as he should desire. This obsequious conduct freed him from all suspicions of the senate, and consequently was the cause of his assassination ; but then it prevented in the succeeding reigns, all flattery from rising to such wild and unexampled heights as might have created disaffection in the minds of the people.

Before Rome submitted to the dominion of one man, the riches of the nobility, in what manner soever acquired, were

certainly immense, but those grandees were divested of the greatest part of their treasures by the emperors. The senators were no longer resorted to by those great and wealthy clients who were the sources of their patrons' affluence. The provinces produced nothing considerable, except for Cæsar; and especially when they were under the government of his præfects, whose office had some resemblance to that of the intendants in France. However, though the fountain from whence all this opulence flowed was at last exhausted, the expenses were continued in their former profusion, and the track being once marked out, the men of rank could only pursue it now, by the emperor's favour.

Augustus had deprived the people of their legislative capacity, and abolished all their jurisdiction with respect to public offences; but he still left them the power of electing magistrates. Tiberius, who dreaded the assemblies of a people so numerous, divested them even of this privilege, and transferred it to the senate, or rather to himself. Now it is impossible to conceive the abject lowness to which the declension of the people's power sunk the spirits of the grandees: when dignities were in the disposal of the populace, the magistrates, who solicited their interest, practised a number of mean condescensions; but these were intermixed with a certain magnificence that in some measure concealed them: for instance, they exhibited pompous games and recreations, they distributed sums of money, and quantities of corn among the people, and sometimes regaled them with splendid feasts. But though the motive was low, the manner seemed august, because it always comports with a great man to obtain the favour of the people by liberality: but when that people had nothing to bestow, and the prince, in the name of the senate, disposed of all employments, they were desired as well as obtained in a dishonourable manner, and could only be compassed by adulation, infamy, and a hateful train of crimes, that were made necessary arts by the iniquity of the age.

It does not indeed appear that Tiberius had any intention to make the senate contemptible; and he complained of nothing so much as the propensity of that body to slavery.

His life was filled with dissatisfactions on that account, but he resembled the generality of mankind, and was fond of contradictory enjoyments. His general politics were inconsistent with his particular passions ; he would willingly have seen a free senate, who, by their conduct, might have created a veneration for his government ; but then he was also desirous of a senate that would every moment be tractable to his fears, his jealousies, and his aversions. In a word, the politician was perpetually subordinate to the man.

We have already intimated that the people had formerly obtained from the patricians the privilege of electing, from their own body, a set of magistrates, who were to protect them from the insults and injustice that might be intended against them ; and in order to capacitate those magistrates for the exercise of such a power, their persons were declared sacred and inviolable, and whoever should presume to treat a tribune injuriously, either by actions or by language, was condemned by the law to suffer death on the spot. Now when the emperors were invested with the tribunitial power, they obtained the same prerogatives, and it was upon this principle that such a number of people were deprived of their lives : from this source flowed the impunity with which informers flourished in their profession ; and hence it was that the accusation of treason—that crime, says Pliny, which was charged on those to whom no real offence could be imputed—was at last extended to any one to whom the wantonness of tyranny pointed out.

I am inclined however to believe, that some of those titles of accusation were not so ridiculous as they appear at present, and can never be persuaded that Tiberius would have caused a man to be accused for selling to one who bought his house, a statue of the emperor ; that Domitian should condemn a woman to die for undressing herself before his image ; or that he should proceed with the same severity against a citizen of Rome, for causing a description of all the earth to be delineated on the walls of his apartment : if such actions as these had not called up an idea in the minds of the Romans very different from that they now excite in us. For my part I am of opinion, that as Rome had changed the form of its government, those actions which now appear

inconsiderable to us might, when they were committed, have a very different aspect; and I judge in this manner, from my reflection on what is now customary in a nation which cannot with any justice be suspected of tyranny, and yet it is a capital crime there to drink to the health of a certain person.

I cannot omit any circumstance which tends to give a clear representation of the Roman genius. That people were so habituated to obedience, and so constantly placed their happiness in homaging their masters, that, after the death of Germanicus they were affected with such inconsolable sorrow and despair, as never appears in our contemporaries. The descriptions given by historians of a desolation, so public, so universal and immoderate, deserve a reader's curiosity; and it is certain that this scene of grief was not affected, since a whole people are never known to practise so much flattery and dissimulation.

The Romans, who had no longer any share in the government, and were chiefly composed of persons who had received their freedom, or such indolent and unindustrious people who lived at the expense of the public treasure, were now sensible of nothing but their imbecility, and afflicted themselves like children or women, who, from a principle of weakness, abandon themselves to sorrow. These people were politically indisposed, they placed all their fears and hopes in the person of Germanicus, and when he was snatched from them by an untimely death, they sank into despair.

No people are so apprehensive of calamity as those whom the misery of their condition should rather discharge from all fear, and who ought to say with Andromache, *Would to heaven I had any enjoyment I could dread to lose!* There are at this day, in Naples, fifty thousand men who have no food but herbs, and whose whole clothing consists of a few miserable rags; and yet these people who are the most wretched creatures upon earth, discover a dreadful consternation at the least irruption of Vesuvius, and are so infatuated as to fear they shall be miserable.

CHAPTER XV.

REMARKS ON THE EMPERORS, FROM CAIUS CALIGULA TO
ANTONINUS.

CALIGULA succeeded Tiberius, and it was said of him that there never was a better slave, nor a worse master : and indeed these two circumstances are very consistent ; for the same turn of mind which inclines a person to be strongly affected at unlimited power in his sovereign, makes him to be no less in love with it, when he rises to empire himself.

Caligula restored the assemblies of the people, which Tiberius had prohibited ; and abolished the arbitrary law and constructions of treason established by that emperor ; from which proceeding we may observe that the beginnings of a bad reign sometimes resemble the conclusion of a good one ; for a wicked prince may, from a principle of contradiction to the motives of his predecessor's conduct, be spirited to actions which the other performed from a virtuous inducement ; and we owe to this very principle a number of good as well as bad regulations.

But what did the Romans gain by these plausible beginnings ? Caligula annulled the law which constituted the circumstantial of treason ; but then he destroyed those who displeased him by a military severity ; and his vengeance instead of pointing at some particular senators, hung over all their heads, like a sword that threatened them with extermination at one blow.

This formidable tyranny of the emperors arose from the disposition of the Romans in general ; who, as they were suddenly enslaved to an arbitrary government, and were hardly sensible of any interval between dominion and subjection, were not prepared for such a transition by any gentle softenings. The fierce and untractable disposition still remained, and the citizens were used in the same manner as they themselves had treated their conquered enemies, and were governed altogether upon the same plan. When Sylla made his public entrance into Rome, he was still the Sylla who had done the same in Athens, and he governed with an

uniform imperiousness. As to us who are natives of France, and have sank into subjection by insensible degrees, if we are destitute of laws, we are at least governed by engaging manners.

The constant view of the combats of gladiators inspired the Romans with extraordinary fierceness; and it was observable that Claudius became more disposed to shed blood by being habituated to those spectacles. The example of this emperor, who was naturally of a gentle disposition, and yet degenerated into so much cruelty at last, makes it evident, that the education in those times was very different from our own.

The Romans being accustomed to tyrannize over human nature, in the persons of their children and slaves, had a very imperfect idea of that virtue we distinguish by the name of humanity. Whence proceeds the savage cast of mind so remarkable in the inhabitants of our colonies, but from their constant severity to an unfortunate class of mankind? When barbarity prevails in civil government, what natural justice or harmony of manners can be expected from the individuals?

We are fatigued and satiated with seeing in the history of the emperors such an infinite number of people whom they destroyed for no other end than to confiscate their goods; our modern accounts furnish us with no such instances of humanity. This difference, as we have already intimated, is to be ascribed to the milder cast of our manners, and the civilizing restraints of a more amiable religion. We may likewise add, that we have no opportunity of pillaging the families of senators who have ravaged the world, and we derive this advantage from the mediocrity of our fortunes, which are consequently in a safer situation. In a word, we are not considerable enough to be plundered.

That class of the Roman people who were called Plebeians, had no aversion to the worst of their emperors; for since they had no longer any share of empire themselves, nor were any more employed in wars, they became the most contemptible and degenerate people in the world; they looked upon commerce and the sciences as only proper for slaves, and the distributions of corn which they received, made them neglect

the cultivation of their lands ; they had been familiarized to public games and splendid spectacles, and since they had no longer any tribunes to obey, or magistrates to elect, those gratifications which they were only permitted to enjoy, became necessary to them, and their indolence and inactivity stimulated their relish of those indulgences.

Caligula, Nero, Commodus, Caracalla, were lamented by the people for their folly, for whatever these loved, the others were as madly fond of, in their turn, and not only contributed their whole power, but even devoted their own persons to those pleasures ; they lavished all the riches of the empire with the greatest prodigality ; and when these were exhausted, the people without the least emotion, beheld all the great families pillaged. They enjoyed the fruits of tyranny, without the least intermixture of uneasiness, because their low obscurity was their protection. Such princes have a natural antipathy to people of merit and virtue, because they are sensible their actions are disapproved by such persons. The contradiction and even the silence of an austere citizen were insupportable to them ; and as they grew intoxicated with popular applause, they at last imagined their government constituted the public felicity, and consequently that it could be censured by none but disaffected and ill-disposed persons.

Caligula was a true sophist in cruelty ; for as he equally descended from Antony and Augustus, he declared he would punish the consuls if they celebrated the day appointed to commemorate the victory at Actium, and that they should likewise feel his severity if they neglected to honour that event ; and Drusilla, to whom he accorded divine honours being dead, it was a crime to bewail her because she was a goddess, and as great an offence to forbear that sorrow because she was a sister.

We have now ascended an eminence from whence we may take a view of human affairs ; when we trace in the Roman history, such a variety of wars, and their prodigal effusion of human blood ; when we view so many once flourishing nations depopulated, and see such a diversity of shining actions and triumphant processions ; when we trace the masterly strokes of politics, sagacity, and fortitude, so con-

spicuous in that people, and reflect on their advances to universal monarchy by schemes so judiciously concerted, so successfully supported, and so happily accomplished ; to what view are all these mighty preparations directed ? Why, truly, to satiate the ambition of five or six monsters ! Is it possible then, that the senate could divest so many kings, of their power, only to plunge themselves into the most abject slavery to one of their unworthy citizens, and to exterminate itself by its own edicts ? Did it rise to such a height of grandeur, to drop more splendidly into ruin, and do the sons of men only labour to augment their power, that they may fall by their own combinations into better hands ?

When Caligula was assassinated, the senate assembled to form a new model of government ; and whilst they were engaged in such deliberations, a party of soldiers rushed in to plunder the palace, and found, in some obscure place, a man trembling with fear ; this man was Claudius, and they immediately saluted him emperor.

Claudius completed the subversion of the ancient form of government, by intrusting the dispensation of justice to his officers ; the principal motive to the wars of Marius and Sylla, was to determine the competition of the senators and the equestrian order for this prerogative ; and it was now wrested from both parties by the arbitrary fancy of a weak man. Surprising event indeed, of a dispute which had set the world in flames !

When the reign of a prince succeeds the dissolution of a republic, no authority can be more absolute than his own, for he then possesses all that power which before was distributed among the people who exercised it without any limitations ; and for this reason the kings of Denmark are the most despotic sovereigns in Europe.

The people were altogether as abject and unmanly as the senate, though they once were animated with such a martial spirit, that, when armies were levied in the city, before the time of the emperors, they gained the military discipline upon the spot, and immediately marched to the enemy. In the civil wars of Vitellius and Vespasian, Rome became a prey to the ambitious, and was full of timorous citizens, who

were struck with consternation by any party of soldiers who could first approach them.

The emperors themselves were in no better a situation ; for as the right of electing a sovereign was not appropriated to any single army, it generally happened, that when an emperor was chosen by one body of soldiers, that circumstance alone was sufficient to discredit him with the others, who immediately set up a competitor to oppose him.

As the grandeur therefore of the republic proved fatal to that form of government, so the mighty extent of the empire was altogether as pernicious to the monarchs. If the territories they were to defend had been confined to moderate limits, those sovereigns might have been effectually served by one principal army ; and the soldiers, when they had once elected their emperor, would have been dutiful enough to acquiesce in their choice.

The soldiers were attached to the family of Cæsar, under which they enjoyed every advantage that a revolution would have procured them. The time came, that the great families of Rome were all exterminated but that of Cæsar ; which itself became extinct in the person of Nero. The civil power, which had been continually depressed, was unable to balance the military ; each army wanted to make an emperor.

Let us here compare the times : when Tiberius began his reign, wherein did he not employ the senate ? He was informed that the armies of Illyrium and Germany had mutinied ; he granted some of their demands, and maintained that it belonged to the senate to judge of the rest. He sent them deputies of that body. Those who have ceased to fear the power, may still respect the authority. When it had been represented to the soldiers, that in a Roman army the children of the emperors, and the deputies of the senate, ran the risk of their lives, they might relent, and even proceed so far as to punish themselves ; but when the senate was entirely depressed, its example moved no one. In vain did Otho harangue his soldiers, to talk to them of the dignity of the senate ; in vain did Vitellius send the principal senators to make his peace with Vespasian ; they did not, for one moment, pay to the orders of the state that respect

which they had so long lost. The armies looked on these deputies as the most abject slaves of a master whom they had already rejected.

It was an ancient custom at Rome for those who obtained a triumph, to distribute some money to each soldier ; it was not much. In the time of the civil wars these gratuities were augmented. Formerly they were made with the money taken from the enemy ; in these unhappy times, they gave that of the citizens, and the soldiers would have a share where there was no booty ; these distributions had taken place only after a war ; Nero made them in a time of peace ; the soldiers were used to them, and they raged against Galba, who boldly told them, that he knew to choose, but not to buy them.

Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, made a very transient appearance in the imperial scene. Vespasian, who, like them, was elected by the army, devoted all his reign to the re-establishment of the empire, which had been successively possessed by six tyrants, all equally cruel, and most of them exceedingly furious and untractable ; generally very weak, and to complete the public calamity, profuse even to infatuation.

Titus, who succeeded his father, was the darling of the people ; but Domitian presented to their view an uncommon monster more inhuman in his disposition, or at least more implacable, than any of his predecessors, because he was more timorous.

His favourite freemen, and, according to some historians, the empress herself, finding his friendship as dangerous as his aversion, and that he allowed no bounds to his suspicions and accusations, turned their thoughts to a successor, and chose the venerable Nerva.

Nerva adopted Trajan, who proved the most accomplished prince in all history ; it was a happiness to be born under his reign, which blessed the empire with more prosperity and true glory than it had ever enjoyed before. He was an admirable statesman, and a most accomplished general ; the native sweetness of his disposition inclined him to universal humanity ; and his unclouded penetration guided him through the best and purest tracts of government ; he was actuated

by a noble soul, to whose embellishment every virtue had contributed ; his conduct was free from all extremes, and his amiable qualities were tempered with such exact proportion that the brightness of one was never lost in the lustre of another. To sum up all, he was the best qualified of mankind, to do honour to human nature, and to represent the divinity on earth.

He accomplished Cæsar's project of invading the Parthians, and was very successful in his wars with that mighty people ; any monarch but himself would have sank under the weight of such an enterprize, where danger was always present, and from whence the source of his necessary supplies was at a vast distance ; in a word, where he could not be sure that victory itself would save him from destruction.

The difficulty consisted in the situation of the two empires, and the military discipline of both nations. If he directed his march through Armenia towards the sources of the Tigris and Euphrates, he was sure to be incommoded with a mountainous and impracticable country, through which no convoy of provision could pass, so that the army would be half destroyed before they could penetrate into Media. On the other hand, if he should strike out a lower tract towards the south, through Nisibis, he would find himself bewildered in a ghastly desert that separated the two empires ; and if he intended to proceed still lower, and march through Mesopotamia, he was then to cross a large country that was either uncultivated or laid under water ; and as the Tigris and Euphrates flowed from north to south, he could not gain a passage into the country without quitting those rivers, which, if he did, he must inevitably perish.

As to the manner practised by the two nations in making war, the strength of the Romans consisted in their infantry, which was the most firm and best disciplined body of soldiers in the world.

The Parthians on the contrary, had no infantry, but then their horse were admirable, and always combated at such a distance, as placed them out of the reach of the Roman army, and the javelin was seldom launched far enough to wound them. Their own weapons consisted of a bow, and many formidable shafts, and they rather besieged an army than

gave it battle ; they were pursued to no purpose in their flight, for that was the same with them as an engagement. They carried off all the inhabitants of the country, and only left garrisons in their fortified places ; and when these were taken, the conquerors were obliged to destroy them. The Parthians likewise set fire to all the country that lay round the Roman army, and did not leave them the least blade of herbage. In a word, they managed their wars in a manner very much like that which is now practised on the same frontiers.

We may add to these disadvantages, that the Illyrian and German legions which were drawn out for this war, were no way capable to sustain it, because the soldiers, who were accustomed to plentiful food in their own country, perished in these regions for want of many necessaries.

The Parthians by these means had accomplished that, for the preservation of their liberty, which had hitherto been impracticable to all other nations, against the victorious power of the Romans ; but they owed this advantage not to any resistless valour, but to their inaccessible situation.

Adrian gave up the conquest of Trajan, and made Euphrates the boundary of his empire ; and indeed it was surprizing that the Romans, after such a series of war, should lose nothing but what they were desirous to quit ; and thus they resembled the ocean, whose expansion is never lessened but when it retires of itself.

This conduct of Adrian occasioned great dissatisfactions among the people. It was recorded in the sacred book of that nation that when Tarquin intended to build the capitol, he found the place most commodious for his purpose filled with the statues of other deities, upon which he employed his skill in augury to discover if they were inclinable to resign their places to Jupiter, and they all consented, except Mars, Hebe, and Terminus. This proceeding gave birth to three religious opinions, namely, that Mars would never resign his place to any other being ; that the Roman youth would be always invincible ; and that their god Terminus would never recede from his station ; the contrary of which was however verified in the reign of Adrian.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONSIDERATIONS ON THE STATE OF THE EMPIRE FROM
ANTONINUS TO PROBUS.

IN this period, the Stoics propagated their doctrines in the empire with great popularity ; and it seems as if nature herself had been industrious to produce this admirable sect, which resembled those plants the earth causes to spring up in places never visited by the sun-beams.

This sect furnished the Romans with their best emperors ; none but Marcus Aurelius could extinguish the remembrance of the first Antonine who adopted him ; and we find ourselves affected with a secret pleasure when we speak of this emperor. We cannot read his life without some impressions of tenderness, and grow inclinable to think better of ourselves, because the history of that prince makes us entertain a more favourable opinion of mankind.

The wisdom of Nerva, the glory of Trajan, the valour of Adrian, and the virtue of the two Antonines gained them the veneration of the soldiers ; but when a set of new monsters became their successors, the abuse of military government appeared in its full enormity ; and the soldiers, who had exposed the empire to sale, assassinated the emperors for the sake of new gratuities.

It has been a conceived opinion, that there is a certain prince in the world, who, for the space of fifteen years, has been endeavouring to abolish the civil government in his dominions, and to substitute the military in its room. I have no intention to make odious reflections on such a design, and shall only observe, that from the nature of things in general, two hundred guards may be a better security to a prince than four thousand ; and besides, an armed people are of all others the most dangerous to be opposed.

Commodus succeeded his father Marcus Aurelius, and was a monster who gave a loose to all his own passions, and those of his courtiers. The persons who delivered the world from such a Barbarian, transferred the imperial dignity to the ven-

erable Pertinax, who was soon assassinated by the prætorian bands.

The empire was then exposed to auction, and Didius Julian carried it by a number of magnificent promises. This proceeding exasperated the whole body of the people ; for though the empire had been frequently bought, it had never been sold upon credit before. Pescennius Niger, Severus, and Albinus, were saluted emperors ; and Julian, not being in a condition to pay the immense sums he had promised, was abandoned by the soldiers.

Severus defeated Niger and Albinus : he was master of extraordinary qualities, but wanted that sweetness of disposition, which in princes is the most amiable quality they can possess.

The power of the Emperors might easily appear more tyrannical than that of modern princes ; for as their dignity was a conjunction of the various authorities in the Roman magistracy, such as dictators, for instance, tribunes of the people, proconsuls, censors, supreme pontiffs, and sometimes consuls, they frequently assumed the dispensation of distributive justice, and it was easy for them to create suspicions that they had oppressed those whom they cendemned ; for the people usually judge of the abuse of power, by the greatness of its extent ; whereas the kings of Europe, being legislators and not executors of the law, sovereign princes but not judges, are consequently discharged from the exercise of an authority that might prove odious ; and have consigned the infliction of punishments to magistrates, whilst they reserved to themselves the distribution of pardons and other popular acts of mercy.

Few emperors have ever been more jealous of their authority than Tiberius and Severus, and yet they suffered themselves to be governed in a most dishonourable manner, the one by Sejanus, and the other by Plautian.

The unhappy custom of proscribing, introduced by Sylla, was still practised under the emperors ; and the prince must have been distinguished by some virtue, if he discountenanced that severe proceeding ; for as the ministers and favourites turned their thoughts to confiscations at the beginning of a reign, they were always representing to their sovereign the

necessity of punishments, and the dangerous effects of clemency.

When Severus gave full play to his proscriptions, a great body of Niger's army retired for safety to the Parthians and perfected them in every part of military discipline wherein they were any way defective; they habituated them to the Roman weapons, and even taught their workmen how to make their martial equipage; in consequence of which, that people, who till then had usually limited their exploits to defensive wars were generally aggressors for the future.

It is very remarkable, that in the long series of those civil wars that were continually raging, the chiefs, who were supported by the legions of Europe, generally defeated the leaders of the Asiatic legions; and we read, in the history of Severus, that he could not take the city of Atrá in Arabia, because the European legions having mutinied, he was obliged to employ those of Syria.

This difference became evident, when the levies were first made in the provinces, and it appeared as considerable in the legions, as it did in the nations out of which they were raised, and who, by nature or education, were more or less formed for war.

Another unhappy consequence likewise ensued from these provincial levies; for the emperors, who were generally elected out of the soldiery, were for the most part strangers, and sometimes the worst of Barbarians. Rome was now no longer mistress of the world, but received laws from the whole universe.

Each emperor brought with him some peculiarity from his own country, relating to fashions, manners, politics, or religion; and Heliogabalus had even formed a resolution to destroy every object of religious veneration in Rome, and to banish all the gods from their temples, that he might place his own in their room.

This circumstance, even considered as independent of the secret operations of the Deity, which are known to him alone, greatly contributed to the establishment of christianity; for nothing was now strange in the empire, and the people were prepared to relish every new custom which the emperors were inclined to introduce.

It is well known, that the Romans received the gods of other nations into their city ; but then they received them with the art of conquerors, and carried them in their triumphal processions ; but when strangers attempted to establish them by their own authority, they were immediately rejected. It is likewise notorious, that the Romans gave foreign deities the names of such of their own gods as were most conformable to the others in their attributes : but when the priests of other countries would introduce the adoration of their divinities, under the proper names, among the Romans, they were not permitted to accomplish that design ; and this was the greatest obstacle to the progress of Christianity.

Caracalla, who succeeded Severus, may be called not only a tyrant, but the destroyer of mankind. Caligula, Nero, and Domitian limited their barbarities to Rome : but this monster endeavoured to extend his fury through the world like a pestilence.

Severus amassed prodigious treasures by the exactions of a long reign, and his proscriptions of those who declared for his competitors in the empire.

Caracalla having commenced his reign with murdering his brother Geta with his own hands, purchased, with those riches, a connivance at his crime from the soldiers who had an extraordinary regard for Geta ; but the liberalities of Caracalla had such an effect upon them, that they declared they had taken oaths to both the children of Severus, and not to one alone.

The immoderate treasures which have been gathered by princes have commonly produced fatal effects ; they generally corrupt the successor, who grows dazzled with the lustre they diffuse ; and if they happen not to prevert his heart, they misguide his mind, and cause him to form plans of mighty enterprizes, by the ministration of a power that is only accidental, always transitory and unnatural, and an empty inflation instead of a real grandeur.

Caracalla augmented the soldiers' pay ; Macrinus wrote to the senate, that this augmentation amounted to seventy millions of drachms. This prince seems to have magnified things ; and if we compare our soldiers' pay now-a-days with

the rest of our public expenses, and suppose that we kept the same proportion among the Romans we shall see that this sum was excessive.

Here we should enquire, what was a Roman soldier's pay? We learn from Orosius, that Domitian raised it a fourth from what it was before. And it appears from a soldier's speech in Tacitus, that at the death of Augustus it was ten ounces of brass per day. We find in Suetonius that Julius Cæsar doubled the pay of his time. In Pliny, at the second Punic war, it was diminished one fifth. It was then in the Punic war about six ounces of copper; in the second, about five ounces; at ten, under Julius Cæsar; and thirteen and a third, under Domitian. I shall make here some reflections:—

The pay which the republic might easily advance, when it was only a small state, when it engaged in a new war every year, and received the spoils of it as often; it was not able to raise, without running in debt, under the first Punic war, when it carried its arms beyond Italy, when it maintained a long war, and supported great armies.

In the second Punic war, the pay was reduced to five ounces of brass; and this diminution might be made without danger at a time when most of the citizens were ashamed to receive pay, and were willing to serve at their own charge.

The treasures of Persia, and of so many other kings, which flowed into Rome, put an end to taxes there. In such public and private opulence, they had the prudence not to enlarge the former payments of five ounces of brass.

Though even from this pay they made a deduction for corn, clothing, and arms; still it was sufficient, because they enrolled only those citizens who had patrimonies of their own.

Marius having enrolled people of no substance, and his example being afterwards followed, Julius Cæsar was obliged to augment the pay.

This augmentation having been continued after the death of Cæsar, they were obliged under the consulship of Hirtius and Pansa, to re-establish taxes.

The weakness of Domitian in adding one-fourth to this pay, was a great blow to the state; the unhappiness of which

was not that it brought in luxury in general, but infused it among people of that condition who ought to be supplied with no more than the bare necessities which nature requires. Lastly, by Caracalla's final augmentation, the empire was thrown into such a condition, that, not being able to subsist without soldiers, it could not subsist with them.

Caracalla, to soften the horror of his fratricide, instituted divine honours to his brother Geta; and, what was very peculiar, he himself received the same deification of Macrinus, who after he had caused him to be stabbed, and was desirous of appeasing the prætorian bands, who regretted the death of a prince whose liberalities they had so often enjoyed, erected a temple, and established a priesthood of Flamens in his honour.

This preserved his memory from all degrading imputations, and the senate not knowing to censure him, he was not ranked among the tyrants, like Commodus, who had not done more to deserve that title than himself.

As the two great emperors Adrian and Severus, one established and the other relaxed the military discipline, and the events exactly corresponded with their causes; the reigns which succeeded that of Adrian were a series of happiness and tranquility; but after the death of Severus, nothing was seen but a succession of calamities and horror.

Caracalla had confined himself to no limitations in his prodigality to the soldiers; and in that particular he acted conformably to the sentiments of his father, who on his death-bed, advised him to enrich the army and disregard all the rest of mankind.

But these politics could be only accommodated to one reign; for the successor being no longer able to continue those expenses, was soon assassinated by the army; so that the emperors who were eminent for wisdom, were always murdered by the soldiers; and those whose lives were infamous, were destroyed either by the conspiracies or edicts of the senate.

When a tyrant suffered himself to be entirely influenced by the war, and left the citizens exposed to their licentious depredations, such injurious proceedings could not be

extended beyond the period of one reign ; because the soldiers, in consequence of their devastations, impoverished the people, and defeated themselves of their pay by that event. It therefore became necessary to reform the military discipline, which was a project always fatal to the persons who presumed to attempt it.

When Caracalla lost his life by the treachery of Macrinus, the soldiers, in despair at the death of a prince, whose liberality had been dispensed to them with an unlimited flow, elected Heliogabalus ; and when he, by his prostitution to infamous pleasures, and the lawless extravagancies he suffered the army to commit, grew contemptible even in their eyes, they dispatched him by an assassination. The same fate attended Alexander, who was preparing to restore the true military discipline, and threatened to punish the soldiers for their misconduct.

In this manner a tyrant, who instead of being solicitous for his safety, affected an ability to be criminal, perished with the fatal advantage of being murdered a few days before another who would willingly have been a better man.

After the death of Alexander, the imperial dignity was transferred to Maximin, who was the first emperor of Barbarian extraction, and had been distinguished by his strength and gigantic stature.

This prince and his son were likewise slain by the soldiers. The two first Gordians perished in Africa ; Maximus, Balbinus, and the third Gordian were massacred ; Philip, who had caused the young Gordian to be destroyed, was himself slain with his son ; and Decius, who was chosen to succeed him, was murdered in his turn by the treason of Gallus.

The Roman empire was improperly so denominated at that time, and might rather be called an irregular commonwealth, nearly resembling the Aristocracy of Algiers, where the militia, who are invested with the sovereign power, elect and depose the magistrate they call the Dey ; and it may perhaps be taken for a general rule, that a military government is, in some respects, a republic rather than a monarchy.

But lest any one should imagine the soldiers had no other

share in the government than what they extorted by their disobedience and insurrections, let it be asked whether the orations in which the emperors addressed themselves to the army, were not at last very correspondent to those which the consuls and tribunes formerly made to the people? And though the soldiers had no particular place to assemble in, nor were under the regulation of any certain forms; though the temper of their minds was not usually serene, their proceedings consisting of action rather than deliberation, did they not however dispose of the public fortune with a sovereign authority? What was an emperor but the minister of a violent and tumultuous government, and did not the soldiers elect him for their own particular convenience?

When the army associated into the empire, Philip, the prætorian prefect of the third Gordian, claimed the exercise of an undivided command, but did not succeed in his pretensions; he then requested the army to divide the power equally between them, but to as little effect; he next intreated them to leave him the title of Cæsar, and was still refused; he afterwards solicited them to create him prefect of the prætorian bands, and met with the usual repulse: till at last he was reduced to plead for his life. The army, in the instance before us, exercised the supreme magistracy in their several decisions.

The Barbarians were at first unknown to the Romans, and for some time afterwards only incommodious; but at last they became formidable to them, by an event altogether unparalleled at that time, and which perhaps may never be equalled hereafter. Rome had so effectually extinguished all nations, that when she at last was vanquished in her turn, the earth seemed to produce a new race of mankind, to accomplish her destruction.

Those princes who have large dominions, seldom find them bordered by any territories considerable enough to be the objects of their ambition; and should there be any such, they would naturally be swallowed up in a series of conquest. We will say they are bounded then by seas and mountains, and vast deserts, whose sterility rendered them contemptible. The Romans for this reason suffered the Germans to range in their forests and gloomy wilds, and let the northern

nations shiver amidst the polar snow ; and yet those inhospitable regions produced a people, who at last enslaved the conquerors of the world.

In the reign of Gallus, a mighty collection of nations, who afterwards became more celebrated, spread their ravages through all Europe ; and the persians having invaded Syria, abandoned their conquests only to preserve their booty.

We no longer see any of those swarms of Barbarians which the North formerly sent out. The violences of the Romans had made the people of the South retire into the North : while the force which confined them subsisted, they remained there : when it was weakened, they dispersed themselves into all parts. The same thing happened some ages after. The conquests and tyrannies of Charlemagne had again forced the nations of the South into the North : as soon as this empire was weakened, they poured a second time from the North into the South. And if at present a prince made the same ravages in Europe, the nations driven into the North, with their backs to the limits of the universe, would maintain their ground, till the moment they should overrun and conquer Europe a third time.

The miserable disorders which had so long been springing up in the several successions of the emperors, were now come to their fatal maturity, and that period which was concurrent with the close of Valerian's reign, and the duration of that of his son Gallienus, produced thirty pretenders to the empire, the greatest part of whom being swept away by their mutual contentions, their devastations were limited to a short reign ; and they gained nothing durable but the appellation of the THIRTY TYRANTS.

Valerian having been taken prisoner by the Persians, and his son Gallienus neglecting the public affairs, the Barbarians penetrated into all parts, and the empire was now in the same condition it was afterwards reduced to in the west, at the close of another century, and it would then have felt its last convulsions, had not a happy conjunction of events interposed for its preservation.

The terrible confusion in succeeding to the empire being come to its height, we find at the end of the reign of Valerian, and during that of Gallienus, his son, no less than thirty

pretenders to the throne, most of whom having got possession of it, and reigned for a short time, were called the tyrants.

Odenatus, prince of Palmyra, and one of the Roman allies, dislodged the Persians, who had invaded the greatest part of Asia: Rome furnished an army of its own citizens, and they effectually delivered it from the Barbarians who came to pillage their city; an innumerable army of Scythians, who put to sea in a fleet of five thousand ships, entirely perished by storms, fatigue, and famine, and even by their formidable grandeur; and Gallienus being at last slain, Claudius, Aurelian, Tacitus, and Probus, who happily succeeded him, and were four extraordinary princes, snatched the empire from the verge of ruin.

CHAPTER XVII.

CHANGES IN THE STATE.

THE Emperors to prevent the continual treasons of the army, associated into the government proper persons in whom they might confide; and Dioclesian, under pretext of the weight and multiplicity of the public affairs, established a law, that there should always be two emperors and as many Cæsars. He judged, that by this proceeding, the four principal armies being possessed by the partners in the empire, would naturally intimidate one another, and that the inferior armies being too weak to have any thoughts of raising their chiefs to the imperial dignity, their custom of election would be gradually discontinued, and entirely abolished at last. Besides, the dignity of the Cæsars being always subordinate, that power, which, for the security of the government, was in the participation of four, would be exercised in its full extent by no more than two.

The soldiers were likewise restrained from their exorbitances by considering, that as the riches of particular persons as well as the public treasure were considerably diminished, the emperors were in no condition to offer them such large donations as formerly, and consequently the gratuities would be no longer proportionable to the danger of a new election.

We may add to this, that the prefects of the prætorian

bands, whose power and employments rendered them the grand viziers of those times, and frequently tempted them to murder their emperors, in order to raise themselves to the throne, were greatly reduced by Constantine, who divested them of all but their civil functions, and augmented their number to four instead of two.

The lives of the emperors began now to be in greater security, and they might reasonably expect to die peaceably in their beds. This circumstance seems in some measure to have softened their dispositions, and they no longer shed human blood with the barbarous prodigality of their predecessors. But as the immense power they still possessed must needs have some particular tendency, it began to manifest itself in a species of tyranny less glaring than the former. The subjects were no longer affrighted with inhuman massacres, but then they were harassed by unjust sentences and forms of judicature, which seemed to defer death only to render life itself uncomfortable. The court governed, and was likewise swayed in its turn, by a greater variety of artifices and a more exquisite train of political refinements, which were conducted with greater silence than usual. In a word, instead of an unterrified disposition to form a bad action, and a cruel precipitation to commit it, those gigantic iniquities shrunk into the vices of weak minds, and could only be called languid crimes.

A new train of corruption was now introduced, the first emperors pursued pleasures, but *these* sank into softness. They showed themselves with less frequency to the soldiers, were more indolent and fonder of their domestics, more devoted to the palace, and more abstracted from the empire.

The poison of the court grew more malignant in proportion to the disguise it assumed. All direct terms were disused in discourse, and distant insinuations became the dialect of the palace. Every shining reputation was sullied, and the ministers as well as the officers of the army were perpetually left to the discretion of that sort of people, who, as they cannot be useful to the state themselves, suffer none to serve it with reputation and glory.

In a word, that affability of the first emperors, which alone qualified them for an insight into their affairs, was

now entirely discarded. The prince had no informations, but what were conveyed to him by the canal of a few favourites, who acted always in concert together, and even when they seemed to disagree in their opinions, were only in the province of a single person to their sovereign.

The residence of several emperors in Asia, and their perpetual competition with the kings of Persia, made them form a resolution to be adorned like those monarchs ; and Dioclesian, though others say Galerius, published an edict to that effect.

This pompous imitation of the Asiatic pride being once established, the people were soon habituated to such a spectacle, and when Julian would have regulated his conduct by a modest simplicity of manners, that proceeding which was no more than a renovation of the ancient behaviour, was imputed to him as a reproachful inattention to his dignity.

Though several emperors had reigned after Marcus Aurelius, yet the empire was undivided ; and as the authority of those princes was acknowledged in all the provinces, it was but one power though exercised by many persons.

But Galerius and Constantius Chlorus, being at variance with each other, divided the empire in reality : and this example, which was afterwards followed by Constantine, who pursuing the plan of Galerius and not that of Dioclesian, introduced a custom which might be called a revolution rather than a change.

We may likewise add, that the strong desire of Constantine to be the founder of a new city, and an impulse of vanity to distinguish it by his own name, determined him to transfer the seat of empire to the east. Though Rome was far from being so spacious within the walls as it is at present, yet the suburbs were prodigiously extensive : Italy was filled with seats of pleasure, and might properly be called the garden of Rome. The husbandmen were in Cilicia, Africa, and Egypt ; but the gardeners lived altogether in Italy. The lands were generally cultivated by the slaves of the Roman citizens, but when the seat of empire was established in the east, all Rome was in a manner transplanted

to that situation. Thither did the Grandees send their slaves, or, in other words, the greatest part of the people and Italy was almost exhausted of its inhabitants.

It was Constantine's intention that the new city should not be inferior in any particular to the old one ; and therefore he took care to have it sufficiently supplied with corn, commanding all the harvest of Egypt to be sent to Constantinople, and consigning that of Africa to Rome, which does not seem to have been a very judicious proceeding.

Whilst the republic subsisted, the people of Rome, who were then the sovereigns of all other nations, became naturally entitled to a proportion of the tribute ; this circumstance induced the senate to sell them corn, at first for a low price, and afterwards to make a gratuitous distribution of it among them ; and when monarchy itself was introduced, this latter custom was still continued, though entirely opposite to the principles of that form of government. It is true, the abuse remained unrectified through an apprehension of the inconveniences that would have risen from its discontinuance ; but when Constantine founded a new city, he established the same custom without the least appearance of reason.

When Augustus had conquered Egypt, he conveyed the treasure of the Ptolemies to Rome ; and this proceeding occasioned much the same revolution which the discovery of the Indies afterwards effected in Europe, and which some ridiculous schemes have since accomplished in our time. The revenue was doubled at Rome, and as that city continued to absorb all the riches of Alexandria, which was itself the repository of the treasures of Africa and the East ; gold and silver by these means became very common in Europe, and the people were able to pay very considerable taxations even in money.

But when the empire was afterwards divided, all these riches flowed in a full tide to Constantinople ; and we may add to this unhappy circumstance, that the mines in Germany had not then been opened : that those of Italy and Gaul were very few and inconsiderable ; and that the mines of Spain had not been worked since the Carthaginians lost that country, or at least they were not so productive as formerly ;

Italy itself was now a continued waste of forsaken gardens, and consequently could not be in any condition to draw money from the East, whilst the West at the same time was drained of all its wealth, by the oriental merchants who supplied the inhabitants with their necessary commodities. Gold and Silver, by these means became extremely scarce in Europe ; and yet the emperors extorted the same pecuniary tributes as formerly, which completed the general destruction.

When a government has been established in one certain form, and its political circumstances are adjusted to a particular situation, it is generally prudent to leave them in that condition ; for the same causes which have enabled such a state to subsist, though they may frequently be complicated and unknown, will still continue to support it ; but when the whole system is changed, remedies can only be accommodated to the inconveniences visible in the theory, whilst others, which nothing but experience can point out, are lurking without opposition in the new plan.

For these reasons, though the empire grew already too great, yet it was effectually ruined by the divisions into which it was parcelled, because all the parts of this vast body, had, for a long series of time, been arranged so as to become settled and steady, and were compacted by a mutual dependency through the whole.

Constantine, after he had weakened the capital, proceeded to impair the frontiers by drawing off those legions which were stationed on the banks of great rivers, and distributing them into the provinces. This innovation was extremely prejudicial in more instances than one ; for as the barrier which comprehended so many nations was now removed ; so the soldiers passed all their time, and grew effeminate in the Circus and the theatres.

When Julian was sent by Constantius into Gaul, he found that fifty towns on the Rhine had been taken by the Barbarians, and that the provinces were all plundered, and that there was now no more than the shadow of a Roman army, which fled at the very mention of the enemies' name.

This prince by his wisdom, and perseverance, joined with œconomy, conduct, and valour, and prospered by a noble series of heroic actions, chased the Barbarians out of their

new settlements, and his name became a terror to them as long as he lived.

The shortness of the reigns, the various political parties, the different religions, and the particular sects of these religions, have greatly disfigured the characters of the emperors; I shall give only two examples: that Alexander, who is a coward in Herodian, is a hero in Lampridius; that Gratian, so highly celebrated by the Orthodox, is compared to Nero by Philostorgius.

No prince saw the necessity of restoring the ancient plan, more than Valentinian. His whole life was employed in fortifying the banks of the Rhine, making levies, raising castles, placing troops in proper stations, and furnishing them with subsistence on those frontiers; but an event that afterwards happened, determined his brother Valens to open the Danube, and that proceeding was attended with very dreadful consequences.

That tract of land which lies between the Palus Mæotis, the mountains of Caucasus and the Caspian sea, was inhabited by a numerous people who composed great part of the nation of the Huns, or that of the Alans. The soil was exceedingly fertile; the inhabitants were fond of wars and robberies: and were always either on horseback or in their chariots, and wandered about the country wherein they were inclosed: they sometimes made depredations on the frontiers of Persia and Armenia; but the ports of the Caspian sea were easily guarded, and it was difficult for them to penetrate into Persia by any other avenues; and as they imagined it impracticable to cross the Palus Mæotis, they were altogether unacquainted with the Romans; so that whilst other nations of Barbarians ravaged the empire, these confined themselves within the limits which their ignorance had drawn around them.

It has been the opinion of some, that the slime which was rolled down by the current of the Tanais had by degrees formed a kind of incrustation on the surface of the Cimmerian Bosphorus, over which these people are supposed to have passed. Others inform us, that two young Scythians being in full pursuit of a hind, the terrified creature swam over that arm of the sea, upon which the youths immediately

following her in the same track, were exceedingly astonished to find themselves in a new world ; and, at their return to the old one, they gave their countrymen a particular account of the strange lands, and if I may be indulged the expression, the inviting Indies they had lately discovered.

Upon this information, an innumerable body of Huns immediately passed those straits ; and, meeting first with the Goths, made that people fly before them. It should seem as if these mighty countries poured their nations out precipitately upon one another, and that Asia had acquired a new weight to make it ponderate equal to the European power.

The Goths in consternation presented themselves on the banks of the Danube, and with a suppliant air intreated the Romans to allow them a place of refuge. The flatterers of Valens improved this conjuncture, and represented it as a fortunate conquest of a new people, who, by the accession of their numbers, would defend and enrich the empire.

Valens ordered them to be admitted into his territories upon delivering up their arms ; but his officers suffered them to re-purchase with their money as many as they pleased : they were afterwards distributed into several allotments of land ; but the Goths, contrary to the custom of the Huns, did not cultivate the portions of ground assigned them. They were even left destitute of the promised supplies of corn, and were ready to perish amidst a land of plenty : they were armed for war, and yet unjustly insulted. In consequence of these provocations, they ravaged all the country from the Danube to the Bosphorus : they destroyed Valens and all his army, and repassed the Danube only to quit the hideous solitude they had effected by their devastations.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AN ACCOUNT OF SOME NEW MAXIMS RECEIVED BY THE ROMANS.

SOMETIMES the pusillanimous spirit of the emperors, and frequently the defenceless state of the empire made the people employ their money to appease the nations that threatened to invade them ; but the desired peace could never be effectually purchased, because those who sold it could, whenever they pleased, oblige the Romans to buy it again.

It is much better to hazard an unsuccessful war, than to part with great sums for a precarious peace ; for a prince is always suspected when it is known he will make a long resistance before he can be vanquished.

Besides, such gratifications as these were changed into tribute at last, and though they were free at the beginning, they became necessary in the event, and passed for an acquired property : for which reason, when an emperor refused them to some particular people, or was not disposed to give them so much as they demanded, they immediately declared themselves his mortal enemies. To produce an instance or two, from a thousand : the army which Julian led against the Persians, was pursued, in his retreat from the east, by the Arabians, to whom the customary tribute had been refused ; and in a short time afterwards, in the reign of Valentinian, the Germans, who had been offered less considerable presents than usual, grew exasperated at that disobliging frugality, and these northern people being already influenced by a point of honour, avenged themselves of this pretended insult by a cruel war.

All those nations that surrounded the empire in Europe and Asia, exhausted it by degrees of its riches : and as the Romans derived their grandeur and power from the gold and silver which flowed into the empire from the coffers of so many kings ; they now grew weak and despicable, because the same gold and silver was drained from them by other nations.

The misconduct of politicians is not always voluntary, but happens frequently to be the unavoidable consequence of their particular situation; and therefore one inconvenience is generally the offspring of another. The army, as we have already declared, became very expensive to the state, and the soldiers had three sorts of advantages; their ordinary pay, donations of recompence after their services, and accidental liberalities, which were often claimed as stated properties by a body of men who had both princes and people in their power.

The inability of the people to furnish these expenses obliged them to employ a less chargeable soldiery, and treaties were struck up with barbarous nations, who had neither the luxury of the Roman army, nor the same spirit and pretensions.

There was another advantage besides this, for as the Barbarians poured their troops into a country with the greatest precipitation, the Romans being unprovided for their reception, and finding it sometimes difficult to raise levies in the provinces, were obliged to hire another party of Barbarians, who were always mercenary, and eager for battle and plunder. This expedient had its use in the present emergency; but when that was over, the Romans found it as difficult to rid themselves of their new allies, as of their enemies themselves.

The ancient Romans never suffered the auxiliary troops to outnumber their own in their armies: and though their allies might properly be reputed their subjects, yet they had no inclination to let those subjects be better warriors than themselves.

But in the latter times, this proportion of the auxiliaries was not only disregarded, but even the national troops were composed of Barbarian soldiers.

Thus were customs established, quite opposite to those which had rendered the Romans masters of the world; and as the genius of their former politics always prompted them to reserve the military art to themselves, and exclude their neighbours from any participation of its principles, they now extinguished it in their own people, and established it among foreigners.

Take this compendium of the Roman history : they subdued all nations by their maxims, but when they had so far succeeded, their republic could not subsist any longer ; the plan of their government must be changed, and maxims contrary to the first, being then introduced, they were divested of all their grandeur.

Fortune never interposes in the government of this world ; and we may be convinced of this truth by the Romans, who enjoyed a continual series of prosperity when they regulated their conduct by one invariable plan, but suffered an uninterrupted train of calamities when they acted upon different principles. There are a set of general causes, either moral or physical, which operate in every monarchy, and either raise and maintain it, or else involve it in ruin. All accidental conjunctures are subordinate to these causes ; and if the hazard of a battle, which, in other words, is no more than a particular cause, has been destructive of a state, some general cause presided, and made a single battle be the inevitable ruin of that state. In a word. the tendency of the main principle draws after it all the particular incidents.

We are sensible that for two centuries past, the Danish troops have been generally defeated by the Swedes ; we may therefore conclude, that, independent of the bravery of the two nations, and the chance of war, either their civil or military government is disconcerted by some secret flaw which produces this effect, and I am of opinion it may easily be discovered.

In a word, the Romans lost their military discipline, and even neglected it in their very arms : Vegetius acquaints us, that the soldiers finding them too ponderous, obtained the emperor Gratian's permission to quit their coats of mail, and soon after their helmits ; and when their bodies were thus defenceless, they grew attentive to nothing but flight.

The same author adds, they had lost the art of fortifying their camps, and that by this negligence they were easily overwhelmed by the Barbarian horse.

The cavalry of the first Romans was not numerous, it was but the eleventh part of the legion, and often less, and what is extraordinary, was made less use of by them than by us who are obliged to carry on so many sieges, where cavalry

is of little service. When the Roman empire was in its decay, their forces consisted of little else but cavalry. I imagine, as a nation improves in the knowledge of the military art, it trusts the more to its infantry ; and as that science decreases, it increases its cavalry in proportion ; the reason is, because the infantry, whether light or heavy, is nothing without discipline, whereas, the cavalry is always of use, even in its disorder. The action of the latter consists chiefly in its impetuosity and sudden shock ; that of the former in its resistance and impenetrable firmness, which is not so much action as re-action. Lastly, the force of the cavalry is momentary ; that of the infantry of longer duration ; now there is need of discipline to continue it in a persevering state.

The Romans arrived at universal monarchy not only by the arts of war, but likewise by their wisdom, their perseverance, their passion for glory, and their heroic love for their country ; and when even these virtues disappeared under the emperors, and they had only the art military among them, yet this alone, notwithstanding the weakness and tyranny of their princes, enabled them to preserve their former acquisitions. But when corruption had at last insinuated itself among the soldiery, they became the prey of every nation.

An empire founded by arms, must likewise have arms for its support. But as a people, when their state is in confusion, are at a loss how to rectify their civil disorders ; in the same manner, when they enjoy a profound peace, and are respected for their power, they never imagine this calm scene may change, and consequently neglect their military force, from whence as they have nothing more to hope, so they fancy they have all things to fear, and sometimes proceed so far as to weaken that basis of their welfare.

It was an inviolable law among the Romans, that whoever abandoned his post or quitted his arms in the combat, should be punished with death. Julian and Valentinian, had reinforced the ancient penalties in this particular ; but the Barbarians who were taken into the Roman pay, and were accustomed to make war in the manner now practised by the Tartars, who fly in order to rally, and are more solicitous for

plunder than martial reputation, were incapable of conforming to such severe regulations.

The discipline of the ancient Romans was so strict that they have had generals who sentenced their own children to die, for gaining a battle without their orders: but when they were intermixed with the Barbarians, they contracted, from that association, the same spirit of independence which marks out the character of those nations; and such as read the wars of Belisarius with the Goths, will see a general very frequently disobeyed by his officers.

Sylla and Sertorius amidst the fury of civil wars would rather die than connive at any thing from whence Mithridates might derive the least advantage; but in the succeeding times, when a minister or any grandee imagined it would be favourable to his avarice, his revenge, or ambition, to admit the Barbarians into the empire, he immediately permitted them to indulge in their depredations.

No states are more necessitated for tributes than those which are weak, because this circumstance obliges them to augment their charges in proportion to the people's inability to defray them; and therefore the tributes in the Roman provinces became insupportable.

It would not be improper to read Salvian's account of the horrible exactions that were made upon the people. The citizens were so harassed by the farmers of the revenue, that they were obliged either to seek refuge among the Barbarians, or surrender their liberty to the first of their insatiable countrymen who would accept of such a present.

This may account for the relations we find in our French history, of the patience with which the Gauls supported a revolution calculated to establish that shocking distinction between a gallant nation, and a community of servile wretches; I say, between a nation who retained their liberty and military privileges, and an ignoble body of people. The Barbarians, in making so many citizens slaves to till the earth, that is, the country to which they were attached, introduced no services which were not more cruelly exacted before.

CHAPTER XIX.

SOME PARTICULARS OF THE GRANDEUR OF ATILLA. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BARBARIANS ACCOUNTED FOR. REASONS WHY THE WESTERN EMPIRE WAS OVERTURNED BEFORE THAT IN THE EAST.

As christianity was established when the empire was in a declining condition, the professors of this religion reproached the Pagans for that decay, and these retorted the charge on the religious doctrines of their antagonists. The christians replied, that Dioclesian ruined the empire, by associating his three colleagues; because each emperor would be altogether as expensive, and maintained as great armies as could have subsisted had there been but one sovereign; in consequence of which, those who furnished the contributions being unequally proportioned to the number of the receivers, the charges became so excessive that the lands were forsaken by the husbandmen, and for want of cultivation lay waste, and were covered with wild and barren forests.

The Pagans, on the other hand, were perpetually exclaiming against the strange innovations in religion, introduced by their adversaries, and never heard of till those days. And as the overflowings of the Tiber, and other prejudicial effects of nature, were, in the flourishing state of Rome, ascribed to the displeasure of the gods; so the calamities of declining Rome were imputed to a religious novelty, and the subversion of the ancient altars.

Symmachus the prefect, in a letter to the emperors, relating to the altar of Victory, attacked the christian religion with arguments extremely popular, and consequently very seducing, and had art enough to set them off with all the plausibility invention could furnish.

“What circumstance, says he, can lead us more effectually to the knowledge of the gods, than the experience of our former prosperity? We ought to be faithful to such a series of ages, and pursue the same track in which our fathers so happily followed their ancestors. Imagine Rome herself

speaks to you in this manner : "Oh Imperial princes ! compassionate fathers of your country ! Look with eyes of veneration on those years of mine, wherein I always conformed to the ceremonies of my predecessors. Those sacred institutions have made the universe obedient to my laws. These were the allies that chased Hannibal from my walls, and drove the Gauls in confusion from the capital. We fervently ask peace for the gods of our country, nay, we solicit it in the anguish of our souls, for our compatriot deities ! We have no inclination to engage in disputes which are only proper for idle persons, and we would express ourselves in the language of supplication, and not of war."

Symmachus was answered by three celebrated authors. Orofius composed his history to prove there had always been calamities in the world, as great as those complained of by the Pagans. Salvian likewise wrote his book, wherein he maintains, that the ravages of the Barbarians were to be imputed to the degenerate behaviour of the christians : and St Austin demonstrates, that the city of heaven is very different from that city on earth in which the ancient Romans received, for a few human virtues, a recompence as vain as the virtues themselves.

We have already observed, that part of the politics of the ancient Romans consisted in dividing all the powers that gave them any umbrage ; but that scheme was defeated in after times, and Rome could not prevent Atilla from conquering all the northern nations ; he extended his victories from the Danube to the Rhine, demolished all the forts and military works on the banks of those rivers, and made both the empires tributary.

Theodosius, says he, with an insolent air, is descended from a father as noble as mine ; but the moment I compelled him to pay tribute to me, he fell from the grandeur of his extraction, and become my vassal ; and therefore it is unjust in him to act like a base slave, and endeavour to prejudice his master by treachery.

"An emperor, said he, upon another occasion, ought not to be a liar ; he promised one of my subjects to give him the daughter of Saturninus in marriage ; and I will immediately declare war against him, if he presumes to depart from his

word; but if the disobedience of those about him puts it out of his power to be punctual, I will march to his assistance."

It is not to be imagined that Attila was induced by any moderation and lenity of temper, to let the Romans subsist; he only conformed himself to the genius of his nation, which prompted him to awe, and not to conquer foreign states. This prince retiring from the splendour of majesty to his mansion built of wood, according to the representation of Priscus, though at the same time he was lord of all the barbarous nations, and, in some degree, master of the chief part of those who were civilized, was one of the greatest monarchs recorded in history.

Ambassadors were dispatched to his court, both from the eastern and western empires of the Romans, to receive his laws and implore his favour. Sometimes he commanded them to deliver up the Huns who had deserted from his armies, or the Roman slaves who had escaped from the vigilance of his officers. At other times he would not be satisfied till some minister of the emperor was surrendered into his power. He charged the empire of the east with a tribute of two hundred thousand pounds of gold; he received the yearly sum allowed to a Roman general, and sent those he intended to reward to Constantinople, that they might be gratified to their utmost wish, making by these means a constant traffic of the apprehensions of the Romans.

He was feared by his subjects, but we have no reason to believe they entertained any aversion to his person: he was surprisingly fierce and impetuous, and at the same time exceeding politic and artful. He appeared violent in his rage, but had a sufficient presence of mind to know when to pardon an offence, or defer a punishment as the circumstances were more or less agreeable to his interest. War was never his choice, when he could derive sufficient advantages from peace. He was faithfully served even by the kings who were subordinate to his power, and had collected into his own conduct all the ancient simplicity of the northern manners. In a word, we can never sufficiently admire this gallant sovereign of a people, whose very children were warmed with enthusiastic rage, at the relation of their father's bravery; whilst those fathers shed manly tears,

because they were incapacitated by age to imitate their martial children.

All the Barbarian nations, after his death, were divided into several independent bodies ; but the Romans were then so weak, that the most inconsiderable people were in a condition to molest them.

The empire was not ruined by any particular invasion, but sank gradually under the weight of the several attacks made upon it, after that general assault it sustained in the time of Gallus. It seemed indeed, to be re-established, because none of its territories were dismembered from the main body ; but it was stooping to its fall by several degrees of declension, till it was at once laid low in the reigns of Arcadius and Honorius.

In vain did the Romans chase the Barbarians from their settlements in the empire : that people, without any compulsion, would have retired to deposit their spoils in their own country. With as little success did Rome endeavour to exterminate that nation, since her cities were still sacked, her villages consumed with flames, and her families either slaughtered or dispersed.

When one province had been wasted the Barbarians who succeeded the first ravagers, meeting nothing for their purpose, proceeded to another. Their devastations at first were limited to Thrace, Mysia, and Pannonia ; and when these countries were ruined, they destroyed Macedonia, Thessaly, and Greece ; from thence they expatiated to Noricum. The empire, that is to say, those tracts of land which were not depopulated, was continually shrinking, and Italy at last became the frontier.

The reason why the Barbarians established themselves in no fixed settlements in the reigns of Gallus and Gallienus, was, because the countries about them had something left that was worth plundering.

Thus the Normans, who in some measure resembled the conquerors of the empire, ravaged France for several centuries, and when at last they could find no more booty, they thought fit to accept of a depopulated province, and parcelled it into several properties.

Scythia, in those times, lying waste and uncultivated, the

inhabitants were frequently subject to famine, and subsisted in a great measure by their commerce with the Romans, who furnished them with provisions from the provinces bordering on the Danube. The Barbarians, in return, gave them the booty and prisoners they had taken, and the gold and silver which the Romans paid them for their friendship. But when the empire could no longer afford them a sufficient tribute for their subsistence, they were obliged to fix themselves in some settlement.

The western empire was destroyed before that in the East, for these reasons :—

When the Barbarians passed the Danube, they found themselves blocked up, on the left hand, by the Bosphorus of Thrace, the city of Constantinople, and all the forces of the eastern empire. This made it necessary for them to bend their march to the right, towards Illyria, and so proceed westward. That part of the country was crowded with a vast conflux of several nations ; and, as the passages into Asia were the best guarded, the whole body of the people bore with a full tide into Europe ; whereas the forces of the Barbarians were separated in their first invasion.

The empire being parcelled out into two great portions, the eastern emperors who were then in alliance with the Barbarians, would not break it to assist the princes of the west : this division of the administration, says Priscus, was very prejudicial to the affairs of the West. Thus the Romans of the East, refused those of the West a naval armament, because they had entered into alliance with the Vandals. The Visigoths, in conjunction with Arcadius, made an irruption into the West, and Honorius was obliged to fly to Ravenna : lastly, Zeno, to get rid of Theodoric, persuaded him to fall upon Italy, which had been already laid waste by Alaric.

There was a very strict alliance between Atilla, and Genseric, king of the Vandals. The last stood in fear of the Goths ; he had married his son to a daughter of their king ; and afterwards slitting her nose, had sent her back to her father. For which reason he united with Atilla. The two empires, enslaved by these two potentates, had no power to shake off their chains. The situation of that of the west

was more particularly deplorable ; it had no forces at sea, they being all dispersed in Egypt, Cyprus, Phœnicia, Ionia, and Greece, the only countries where at that time commerce subsisted. The Vandals and other nations attacked the West from all sides : an embassy came from Italy to Constantinople, says Priscus, representing that it was impossible they could keep their ground, unless peace was made with the Vandals.

Those that presided in the West were not mistaken in their politics. They judged it necessary to have Italy, which was in some respects the head, and in others the heart of the empire. They removed the Barbarians to the extremities, and settled them there. The design was well laid, and as well executed. These nations asked for nothing but subsistence ; they gave them the plains, and reserved to themselves the mountainous parts of the country, the defiles, the passes over rivers, and the strong forts upon them, they kept in their own hands the sovereignty. It is probable these people would have been forced to have become Romans ; and the facility with which these ravagers were themselves destroyed by the Franks, by the Greeks, and the Moors, is a proof of this conjecture. The whole system was overthrown by one revolution more fatal than all the rest ; the army of Italy, composed of strangers, demanded that which had been granted to nations still greater strangers ; it formed, under Odoacer, an aristocracy, which claimed the third of the lands in Italy ; and this was the most fatal blow to the empire.

Amongst so many misfortunes it is natural to enquire, with a melancholy curiosity, after the state of Rome : it was, we may say, without defence, and could easily be starved by an enemy. The extent of its walls made it almost impracticable for the inhabitants to defend them ; and, as it was situated in a plain, it might be stormed without much difficulty. Besides this, no recruits were to be expected ; for the number of the people was so extremely diminished, that the emperors were obliged to retire to Ravenna, a city once fortified by the sea as Venice is at this time.

The Romans being generally abandoned by their princes, began to take the sovereign power into their own hands, and

stipulated for their safety by treaties, which is the most likely method of acquiring the supreme authority.

Armorica and Brittany, seeing themselves forsaken, began to regulate themselves by their own laws.

This was the fatal period of the western empire, Rome ascended to such a height of grandeur, because the scenes of her former wars opened successively, and by an incredible felicity of affairs she was never attacked by one nation till another had been first destroyed: but Rome herself was overpowered at last, because she was invaded at once by all the nations around her.

CHAPTER XX.

THE CONQUESTS OF JUSTINIAN. SOME ACCOUNT OF HIS GOVERNMENT.

As this vast body of people broke all at once like a flood into the empire, they mutually incommoded one another, and all the politics of those times consisted in setting them at variance together: this was a circumstance easy to accomplish, their avarice and fierce disposition greatly contributing to make it practicable. The largest part of them was therefore destroyed before they could fix themselves in any settlement; and this was the reason why the empire of the East still subsisted for some time.

The northern regions were likewise exhausted at last, and no longer poured out those innumerable armies they originally produced; for, after the first invasion by the Goths and Huns, and especially since the death of Attila, these people and their successors appeared in the field with force much inferior to the former in number.

When the nations, who assembled together in the form of an army, were distributed into peaceful partitions of lands, much of their martial vivacity was abated; and as they were scattered through the countries they had conquered, they were exposed themselves to the same invasions.

In this situation of affairs, Justinian undertook the recovery of Africa and Italy, and accomplished the same

designs which the French so happily executed against the Visigoths, the Burgundians, the Lombards, and the Saracens.

When Christianity was first planted among the Barbarians, the Arian sect was predominant in the empire, and Valens sent priests to them, who were their first apostles. Now, in the interval, from their conversion to their establishment, this sect fell into disreputation among the Romans; for which reason, when the Barbarians of this persuasion found all the country orthodox, and could never insinuate themselves into the affections of the people, it was easy for the emperors to incommode them.

We may likewise add, that the Barbarians being unqualified for the siege of towns, and much more so for their defence, suffered the walls to drop into ruins. Procopius informs us, that Belisarius found all the Italian cities in this condition; and those of Africa had already been dismantled by Genseric, with a Gothic view of fortifying the inhabitants.

The generality of these northern people, after they had established themselves in the provinces of the south, soon degenerated into the unmanly softness of those regions, and became incapable of the fatigues of war. The Vandals were emasculated with pleasures; a luxuriant table, an effeminate habit, the delicacy of baths, the enervating lull of music, gay dances, florid gardens, and splendid theatres were now become their necessary gratifications.

They no longer disquieted the Romans, says Malchus, when they discontinued those armies which Genseric perpetually kept prepared for any expedition, and with which he prevented the vigilance of his enemies, and astonished all the world with the rapidity of his enterprizes.

The cavalry of the Romans, and that of the Huns their auxiliaries, were very expert at drawing the bow; but that of the Goths and Vandals fought only with the sword and lance, and were unpractised in the distant combat; for which reason Belisarius ascribes part of his success to this difference.

Justinian received signal services from the Huns, a people from whom the Parthians sprung, and these descendants combated like their ancestors. When the Huns lost all their power by the divisions which the great number of

Attila's children occasioned, they served the Romans in the quality of auxiliaries, and formed their best cavalry.

Each of those barbarious nations was distinguished by their particular manner of combating as well as by their arms. The Goths and Vandals were formidable at the drawn sword; the Huns were admirable bowmen: the Suevi were serviceable infantry; the Alans were heavily armed; and the Heruli were a flying troop. The Romans selected from all these people, the different bodies of troops which were serviceable to their designs, and fought against one nation with the joint advantage of all the rest.

It is remarkable, that the weakest nations have been those that made the greatest establishments; we should be much deceived if we judged of their force by their conquests. In this long train of irruptions, the Barbarians, or rather the swarms which issued from them, were vanquishers or vanquished; every thing depended on circumstances: and while one great nation was defeated or engaged, a body of new adventurers finding a country open, carried desolation into it. The Goths, who by reason of the disadvantage of their arms, were obliged to fly before so many nations settled in Italy, Gaul, and Spain: the Vandals, too weak to keep their possessions in Spain, passed into Africa, where they founded a great empire.

Justinian could not fit out more than fifty ships against the Vandals; and when Belisarius embarked, he had but five thousand soldiers. This was undoubtedly a bold expedition; and Leo, who before that time had sent against the same people a fleet of all the ships in the east, and manned with a hundred thousand soldiers, could not conquer Africa, and was even in danger of losing the whole empire.

These great fleets have been as little successful as very numerous land armies; for as they impoverish and depopulate a state, so, should the expedition be of a considerable length, or any misfortune befall them, they can neither be succoured nor recruited; and if one part be lost, the other becomes insignificant; because ships of war, as well as transports, cavalry, infantry, ammunition, in a word all the particulars, have a necessary dependence on the whole. The tardiness of an enterprize makes those who engage in it always find

the enemy prepared to receive them : besides, such an expedition is seldom made in a proper season, and generally overtaken by the stormy months, because such a vast number of preparations are hardly ever completed till the season is too far advanced.

Belisarius invaded Africa, and very advantageously supplied himself with provisions from Sicily, in consequence of a treaty made with Amalasonta queen of the Goths. When he was sent to attack Italy, he took notice that the Goths received their subsistence from Sicily, and therefore began his expedition with the conquest of that island ; by which proceeding he at the same time starved his enemies, and plentifully supplied his own army with all accommodations.

Belisarius took Carthage, Rome, and Ravenna, and sent the kings of the Goths and Vandals captives to Constantinople, where the ancient triumphs were renewed after a long interval of years.

The extraordinary qualities of this great man, naturally account for his success. A general, who was master of all the maxims of the first Romans, was then at the head of such an army as that brave people anciently composed.

Virtues that are very shining are generally concealed or lost in servitude ; but the tyrannical government of Justinian could not oppress the grandeur of that soul, nor the noble superiority of such a genius.

Narses the eunuch was thrown into this reign to make it still more illustrious : as he had received his education in the palace, he was honoured with a greater share of the emperor's confidence ; for princes always esteem their courtiers the most faithful of their subjects.

On the other hand, the irregular conduct of Justinian, his profusions, tyranny and rapine, his intoxicated fondness for building, changing, and reforming, his inconstancy in his designs, a severe and weak reign, made still more inconvenient by a lingering old age, were a train of real calamities, intermixed with unprofitable success, and a false glitter of unsubstantial glory.

These victories were not the effect of any solid power subsisting in the empire, but resulted from the lucky con-

junction of some particular circumstances, and were soon rendered ineffectual; for whilst the army was pursuing its fortunate beginnings, a new swarm of barbarous nations passed the Danube, and spread desolation through Illyria, Macedonia, and Greece, and the Persians, in four invasions, weakened the empire with incurable wounds.

The more rapid these conquests appeared, the less durable was their foundation: and Italy and Africa were hardly wrested from the enemy, before it became necessary to recover them a second time by new victories.

Justinian had taken from the theatre a woman who had long prostituted herself to immodest pleasures, and she governed him with an authority that has no parallel in history, perpetually intermixing his affairs with the passions and fanciful inconsistencies of her sex; in consequence of which, she defeated the victorious progress of his arms, and disconcerted the most favourable events.

The eastern people were always accustomed to a plurality of wives, in order to deprive the sex of that strange ascendant they maintain over man in our climates; but at Constantinople the prohibition of Polygamy made the empire subject to the will of a female, or, in other words, threw a natural weakness into the government.

The people of Constantinople had for many years been divided into two factions, denominated the Blue and the Green; they derived their origin from the approbation usually given in the theatres to some particular actors; and when races were exhibited in the circus, the charioteers who were dressed in green, disputed the prize with those who were habited in blue; and each of these spectators became interested even to madness, in the competition of those colours.

These two factions being diffused through all the cities of the empire, proportioned their animosities to the rank and grandeur of those cities, or, as we may justly say, to the indolence and idle lives of the generality of the people.

But though such divisions are always necessary in a republic, and may be considered as essential to its support, they are infallibly destructive to an arbitrary government,

because they can only change the person of the sovereign, but never contribute to the establishment of the laws, or the discontinuance of abuses.

Justinian, who favoured the faction of the Blue, and denied all justice to the Green, increased the mutual inveteracy of both parties, and consequently strengthened them in the state.

These contending parties proceeded so far as even to disannul the authority of the magistrates; the Blues were in no apprehension of the laws, because the emperor protected them against their severity; and the Greens began to disregard them, because they could not defend them from insults.

All the bands of friendship, affinity, and gratitude, were cut asunder, and whole families destroyed each other: every villain who intended to be remarkably wicked, belonged to the faction of the Blue, and every man who was either robbed or assassinated, was a partisan for the Green.

We may add, that the government was, if possible, more cruel than senseless; and the emperor, not satisfied with a general injustice of loading his subjects with excessive impositions, resolved to ruin them in their private affairs by all imaginable tyrannies.

I am far from entertaining an implicit belief of all the particulars related by Procopius in his secret history, because the pompous commendations he, in his other works, bestows on this prince, may make his veracity a little questionable in this, where he paints him out as the most stupid and inhuman tyrant that ever lived.

On the other hand, there are two circumstances which incline me to pay some regard to this secret history; for, in the first place, the particulars seem better connected with the astonishing weakness which discovered itself at the latter end of this reign, and in those of the succeeding emperors.

The other circumstance is that monument which still exists among us, and is a collection of the laws of this emperor, which, in the course of a few years, present us with greater variations than are to be found in our laws for the three last centuries of our monarchy.

These variations generally relate to matters of so little importance, that we can see no reason to induce a legislator to make them, unless we refer to the secret history for a solution, and acknowledge that this prince exposed his judgment and his laws equally to sale.

But the political state of the government received the greatest injury from his project of establishing a general uniformity of opinion in matters of religion, and in circumstances that rendered his zeal as indiscreet as possible.

The ancient Romans fortified their empire by indulging all sorts of religious worship ; but their posterity destroyed it by rooting out the various sects, whose doctrines were not predominant.

These sects were composed of entire nations, some of which, as the Jews and Samaritans, had retained their ancient religion after they were conquered by the Romans ; others were dispersed through the country, as the followers of Montanus, in Phrygia, the Manichees, the Sabbatarians, the Arians, in the other provinces ; besides which, the generality of the people in the country continued in idolatry, and were infatuated with a religion as gross as their understandings.

These sects Justinian caused to be extirpated by the military as well as the civil power ; and the persecuted people, revolting in their own defence, he thought himself obliged to exterminate them from the empire ; in consequence of which, he depopulated several provinces, and whilst he imagined himself increasing the number of the faithful, he was only diminishing the race of mankind.

Procopius assures us, that Palestine, by the destruction of the Samaritans, was changed into a desert ; and this proceeding was the more singular, because the very zeal which weakened the empire, in order to establish religion, sprung out of the same quarter from whence the Arabians afterwards sallied with an intention to subvert it.

But nothing could be more aggravating, than that the emperor, whilst he was so averse to all toleration himself, should yet disagree with the empress in the most essential points ; he followed the council of Chalcedon, and she

favoured its opposers ; whether, as Evagrius says, they were sincere in this proceeding or not, is uncertain.

When we read Procopius's description of Justinian's buildings, and the forts and other places of defence he erected in all parts, it naturally raises in our minds the idea of a flourishing state ; but that idea happens to be very delusive.

The ancient Romans had none of these fortifications, but placed all their security in their armies, which they distributed along the banks of rivers, and raised towers at proper distances for the lodgment of the soldiers.

Afterwards, indeed, when they had but very indifferent armies, and frequently none at all, the frontiers could not defend the countries they limited, and therefore it became necessary to strengthen them ; the consequence of which was, they had more fortifications, and less force ; many places for retreat, and very few for security ; the country was only habitable about the fortifications, and these were built in all parts. The condition of the empire resembled that of France in the time of the Normans, which was never so defenceless as when all its villages were girt around with walls. We may venture to affirm, therefore, that the whole catalogue of Justinian's forts, which fills several pages in Procopius, only exhibits to us so many monuments of the weakness of the empire.

CHAPTER XXI.

DISORDERS IN THE EASTERN EMPIRE.

THE Persians, during this period, were in a much happier situation than the Romans ; they had little reason to be apprehensive of the northern people, because that part of mount Taurus which extends between the Caspian and Euxine seas, separated them from those nations, and they effectually shut up a very narrow pass, which was the only practicable avenue for the cavalry, in every other part the Barbarians were obliged to descend from frightful precipices,

and to quit their horses in which all their military strength consisted ; and besides these impediments they were blocked in by the Araxes, a river of great depth, and which flows from west to east, all the passages of which were easy to be descended.

With all these advantages the Persians were in perfect tranquility with respect to the eastern nations ; on the south they were bounded by the sea ; and the Arabian princes, who were partly their allies, and partly in confederacy with the Romans, were totally engaged in pillaging one another. The Persians therefore had none whom they could properly call their enemies but the Romans. We are sensible, said an ambassador of Hormisdas, that the Romans are engaged in several wars, and are at variance with almost all nations, whilst we, as they well know, have no hostilities with any people but themselves.

The Persians had cultivated the military art to as great a degree as it was neglected by the Romans. Belisarius said to his soldiers, "The Persians are not your superiors in courage, and only surpass you in the discipline of war."

They had likewise the same superiority in the cabinet as they preserved in the field, and demanded tribute of the Romans, under a pretence that they maintained garrisons in the Caspian streights, as if each nation had not a right to guard its frontiers. They obliged them to pay for peace, and every cessation of arms ; and did not scruple to make them purchase the very time employed either in negotiations or war.

The Avari having crossed the Danube, the Romans, who had seldom any troops to oppose them, being engaged against the Persians when they should have given battle to the Avari, and having full employment from these when they ought to have faced the Persians, were still obliged to submit to a tribute ; and thus the majesty of the empire bowed down before all nations.

Justin, Tiberius, and Maurice were very sedulous to defend the empire ; the last of these princes had some virtues, but they were all sullied by an avarice almost incredible in a great monarch.

The king of the Avari offered to restore all his Roman

prisoners to Maurice, if he would ransom them at an inconsiderable price for each man ; and this proposal being rejected, he caused them all to be inhumanly murdered. The Roman army was greatly exasperated at this proceeding, and the faction of the Greeks making an insurrection at the same time, a centurion named Phocas was raised to the imperial dignity, and he ordered Maurice and his children to be put to death.

The history of the Grecian empire, for so we shall denominate the monarchy of the Romans for the future, is little more than a series of revolts, seditions, and perfidy. The subjects had no idea of the loyalty due to princes, and there were so many interruptions in the successions of the emperors, that the title of *Porphyrogenitus*, which signifies one born in the apartment where the empress reposed, was an appellation which few princes of the several imperial families could with any propriety assume.

All the paths that could be struck out to empire were unexceptionable ; and the candidates were conducted to the diadem by the clergy, the senate, the peasants, the inhabitants of Constantinople, and the people of the provincial cities.

Christianity being now the prevailing religion of the empire, was intermixed with several successive heresies, which called aloud for condemnation. Arius having denied the divinity of the Word ; the Macedonians that of the Holy Spirit ; Nestorius the unity of the person of Jesus Christ ; the Eutychians his two natures ; the Monothelites his two wills ; it became necessary to convene councils against them : but their decisions not being universally received, several emperors, who had been seduced into these heretical opinions, relapsed into the same persuasions after they had been condemned ; and as no nation was ever so implacable against heretics as the Greeks, who even imagined themselves polluted when they conversed with any of that class, or had any cohabitation with them, several emperors, in consequence of that popular aversion, lost the affections of their subjects, and the people became persuaded that princes who were so frequently rebellious against God, could never be chosen by Providence to be their sovereigns.

A new opinion, formed by an idea that it was unlawful to shed Christian blood, and which daily grew more popular when the Mohammedans appeared upon the stage of military action, was the cause that offences, in which religion was not directly interested, were punished with great moderation. Those who had spirited up an insurrection, or framed any attempt against the person of the prince, were only sentenced to lose their eyes, to have their hair or noses cut off, or to suffer some other mutilation. As these offences might be committed with very little hazard, they might likewise be attempted without much courage.

A certain veneration for the regalia of imperial majesty drew the eyes of all the people on those who presumed to wear them, and it was criminal to be either habited in purple, or to keep it in a wardrobe; but when a man had once the resolution to appear in that dress, the multitude immediately flocked after him, because their respect was more attached to the apparel than the person.

Ambition received greater provocatives still, from the surprising infatuation of those times; and there was hardly a man of any considerable consequence who could not accommodate to himself, some prediction that promised him the empire.

As the indispositions of the mind are generally incurable, judicial astrology, and the art of pointing out futurity by objects seen in a basin of water, succeeded among the Christians, to the solemn imposture of divination by the entrails of victims, or the flight of birds, which had been abolished with paganism its parent; and vain promises became the motives to most of the rash actions of particular persons, and constituted the wisdom of princes' councils.

The calamities of the empire daily increasing, it was natural to impute ill success in war, and dishonourable treaties in peace, to the injudicious conduct of those at the helm.

One revolution was now pregnant with another, and the effect itself became a cause: and as the Greeks had seen such a succession of different families on the throne, they were not devoted to any; and since fortune had created so many emperors out of all classes of people, no birth

was so obscure, and no merit so inconsiderable as to be destitute of hope.

Several examples which had been familiar to the nation, modelled the genius of the people in general, and formed a system of manners which reigned as imperiously as the laws.

It should seem that great enterprizes among us, are more impracticable than they were to the ancients; it is very difficult to conceal them, because intelligence is now become so manageable that every prince has ministers in each court, and traitors may possibly be lurking in all the cabinets of majesty.

The invention of posts has given wings to information, and can immediately waft it to all parts.

As great undertakings are not to be accomplished without money, and as merchants are masters of it since the invention of bills of exchange, their affairs are always connected with the secrets of state, and they neglect nothing to penetrate into those depths.

The fluctuations in exchange, without any visible cause, entice numbers of people to search after it, and some of them find it at last to their cost.

The invention of printing, which has put books into the hands of all the world; the improvements in engraving, which have made geographic charts so common; in a word, the establishment of political papers, give every individual a knowledge of general interests, sufficient enough to instruct him in all private transactions.

Conspiracies in a state are now become very difficult, because, since the establishment of posts, all the secrets of particular persons are in the power of the public.

Princes may act with promptitude, because all the power of the state is in their possession. Conspirators must proceed with caution, because they are destitute of expedients; and, since at present all transactions are more easily discovered, those who form designs against a government, are generally detected before they can adjust their schemes.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE WEAKNESS OF THE EASTERN EMPIRE.

PHOCAS, amidst the general confusion of affairs, being unsettled in his new dignity, Heraclius came from Africa, and caused him to be murdered ; at the same time he found the provinces invaded, and the legions destroyed.

As soon as this prince had, in some measure, remedied these disasters, the Arabians quitted their own country, to extend the empire and religion which Mohammed had founded by their co-operation.

No people ever made so rapid a progress ; for they immediately conquered Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and Africa, and then turned their hostilities against the Persians.

God permitted his religion to be laid low, in so many places where it once had been predominant ; not that it now ceased to be the object of his providential care, but because it always either in its state of glory or depression produces its natural effect, which is the sanctification of the soul.

The welfare of religion has no similitude to the prosperity of empires, and we are told by a celebrated author, that it may well be distempered since malady itself is the true state of a christian ; to which we may add, that the humiliations and dispersion of the church, the destruction of her temples, and the persecutions of her martyrs, are eminent seasons of her glory ; but when she appears triumphant to the eyes of the world, she is generally sinking in adversity.

We are not to have recourse to enthusiasm alone to clear up this memorable event of the Arabian conquests, which spread through so many countries ; the Saracens had been long distinguished among the auxiliaries of Rome and Persia ; and they, as well as the Osroanians, were the most expert archers in the world. Alexander Severus and Maximim had engaged them as much as possible in their service, and they were extremely useful in the wars with the Germans, to whom their arrows were fatal at a great distance. The

Goths themselves. in the reign of Valens, were incapable of resisting them : in a word, they at that time were the best cavalry in the world.

We have already observed. that the legions raised in Europe were much preferable to those of Asia, but it was directly contrary with respect to the cavalry ; I mean that of the Parthians, the Osroenians, and the Saracens. This was the power that stopped the full career of the Roman conquests, because, after the death of Antiochus, a new nation of Tartars, who had the best cavalry of any people, made themselves masters of Upper Asia.

This cavalry was heavy, and that of Europe light. quite contrary to the present nature of their military equipage. Holland and Friseland were not as yet won from the waters ; and Germany was full of woods, lakes, and marshes, where the cavalry were of little importance.

When a free passage was opened to the great rivers, the stagnant waters shrunk from those marshes, and Germany assumed a new surface. Many changes were effected by the works of Valentinian on the Neckar, and those of the Romans on the Rhine ; and commerce being once established, those countries which did not originally produce horses began to propagate the breed, and the inhabitants made great use of those animals.

Constantine, the son of Heraclius, having been poisoned, and his son Constance slain in Sicily, Constantine the bearded, his eldest son, succeeded to the empire ; but the grandees of the eastern provinces being assembled on this occasion, were determined to crown the other brothers of this prince jointly with himself ; alledging, that as it was indispensably necessary for them to believe in the Trinity, so it was reasonable they should be governed by three emperors.

The Grecian history is crowded with proceedings as extraordinary as this, and a low turn of mind being then characteristic of that nation, the former wisdom was no longer conspicuous in their actions, and the empire became a scene of troubles and revolutions, to which it was impossible to assign any preparatory motives.

An universal bigotry had stupified and emaciated the whole empire. Constantinople was the only place in the

east where christianity was predominant, and likewise, where the pusillanimous indolence, and degrading softness of the Asiatic nations, were blended with devotion itself. Of a thousand instances that might be alledged, I shall only mention the conduct of Philippicus the general of Maurice's army, who being on the point of charging the enemy in the field, burst into tears when he suddenly considered what numbers of mankind were then to be destroyed.

The tears of the Arabians flowed from a very different source, when they wept with regret that their general had agreed to a truce which frustrated their intended effusion of Christian blood.

There is a total difference between an army of fanatics, and another of bigots ; and it evidently appeared in a late memorable revolution, in which Cromwell's army resembled the Arabians, whilst the Irish and Scottish forces were like the Greeks.

A gross superstition which debases the mind as effectually as true religion exalts it, had reduced all virtue and devout confidence in the deity, to a stupid veneration for images ; and history presents us with generals who would raise a siege, or surrender a city for the gallant acquisition of a relic.

Christianity degenerated under the Grecian empire into as many corruptions as were intermixed with it in our time by the Muscovites, till the Czar Peter the first, new modelled that nation, and introduced more changes into the dominions he governed than are usually established in those which conquerors usurp.

We may easily believe the Greeks were infected with idolatry. There can be no suspicion that the Italians and Germans were but coldly devoted to external worship ; and yet when the Greek historians take notice of the contempt expressed by the Italians for images and relics, one would be apt to compare them with the modern zealots against Calvin. Nicetas informs us, that the Germans, in their march to the Holy Land, were received by the Armenians as friends, because they did not offer any adoration to images. Now, if the Italians and Germans did not sufficiently reverence images, in the apprehension of the Greeks, what

an enormous veneration must then be paid to them by this people?

The east was on the point of being made the scene of such a revolution as happened about two centuries ago in the west, when, upon the revival of learning, the abuses and corruptions in religion became evident to all, and as every person was inquisitive after a proper remedy, so there were some so bold and untractable as to rend the church by divisions, instead of restoring it to its original purity by a due reformation.

Leo Isaurus, Constantine Copronymus, and Leo his son were implacable against images, and when the worship of them had been re-established by the empress Irene, Leo the Arminian, Michael the Stammerer, and Theophilus, abolished them again. These princes imagined they could not moderate that worship unless they destroyed it effectually; they likewise turned their hostilities against the Monks, who incommoded the state, and as their proceedings were always carried to extremes, they endeavoured to exterminate that fraternity instead of regulating them in a proper manner.

The monks being accused of idolatry by those who favoured the new opinions, retorted, in their turn, upon their adversaries, and accused them of magic practices, and then calling upon the people to behold the churches that were divested of images, and the other furniture, which till that time had been the objects of adoration, they created a belief in their flock, that these holy places must certainly be profaned by daily sacrifices to Demons.

The controversy relating to images, was connected with very delicate circumstances, which kindled it into a raging flame, and in the event made persons of solid judgment incapable of proposing a moderate worship. The dispute included the tender article of power, and the monks having seized it, in consequence of their spiritual usurpations, they could neither enlarge nor maintain it, but by making daily additions to the act, of external adoration, wherein they were so considerably interested. For this reason all oppositions to the establishment of images were considered as so many hostilities against themselves, and when they had succeeded in their pretensions, their power was no longer limitable.

This period was remarkable for such a conjuncture as happened some centuries afterwards in the warm disagreement between Barlaam and the Monks of that time, which brought the empire to the verge of destruction. The subject of the dispute was, whether the light which encircled Jesus Christ on Mount Tabor was created or not. The Monks indeed were indifferent as to either part of the question in debate, but as Barlaam made a direct attack upon that fraternity, they found it consistent with their interest to assert that light to be uncreated.

The war which those emperors who were called Iconoclasts, declared against the Monks, revived some particular principles of government, and offered a plausible pretence for employing the public revenue, for the public advantage, and for disengaging the state from every inconvenience that encumbered it.

When I consider the profound ignorance into which the Grecian priests had plunged the laity, it seems natural to compare the former to those Scythians mentioned by Herodotus, who caused the eyes of their slaves to be plucked out, that their attention might not be diverted, when they were churning milk for their masters.

When the empress Theodora had re-established the use of images, the Monks immediately began to corrupt the public devotion, and proceeded even to oppress the secular clergy: they thrust themselves into every beneficial see, and gradually excluded all ecclesiastics from episcopal promotion. By this proceeding they became unsupportable; and if we draw a parallel between them and the Latin clergy, and compare the conduct of our popes with that of the patriarchs of Constantinople, we shall see in our pontiffs and clergy, a set of men altogether as judicious as the others were irrational.

We are presented with a surprising contradiction in human nature, when we consider that the ministers of religion among the ancient Romans, when they were not made incapable of public employments and civil society, were but little solicitous about either; and that after the establishment of Christianity, the ecclesiastics who were most secluded from temporal affairs, engaged in them with the greatest

moderation ; but when the Monks, in the declension of the empire, became the sole clergy, these people who were forbidden by a more particular profession, to intermeddle with the transactions of state, embraced all opportunities that could possibly introduce them into the government, and never ceased to fill every place with confusion, and to discompose the world which they pretended to renounce.

There was not any affair of the empire, any particular peace or war, any truce or negociation, or any private treaty of marriage capable of completion without the ministration of these Monks ; they crowded into the cabinets of princes, and composed the greatest part of the national assemblies.

The calamities which resulted from this irreligious officiousness are inconceivable : these ecclesiastic statesmen infused an indolent insignificance into the minds of princes, and communicated a taint of imprudence to their best actions. Whilst Basilius employed his naval forces in erecting a church to the honour of St Michael ; he abandoned Sicily to the depredations of the Saracens, and suffered them to take Syracuse ; but lest he should be singular in that proceeding, Leo, his successors, consigned his fleet to the same employment, and permitted the Barbarians to possess themselves of Tauromenia and the island of Lemnos.

Andronicus Palæologus entirely neglected his maritime power, because he had been assured God was so well satisfied with his zeal for the Church's peace, that his enemies would never presume to invade his dominions by sea. He was even apprehensive that the Deity would call him to a strict account for the time he devoted to the necessary affairs of state, and deducted from spiritual attentions.

The Greeks being very loquacious, great disputants, and naturally inclined to sophistry, were perpetually incumbering religion with controversial points ; and as the Monks were in great reputation in a court which was always weak in proportion to its corruption, that court, and those Monks mutually communicated infection to each other : in consequence of which, the emperors devoted all their thoughts, sometimes to calm, and frequently to inflame theological disputes, which were always observed to be most frivolous when they were debated with the greatest warmth.

Michael Palæologus, whose reign was so infested with controversies in religion, growing sensible of the melancholy devastations committed by the Turks in Asia, said with a sigh, that the rash zeal of some persons, who by exclaiming against his conduct, had exasperated his subjects against him, [made it necessary for him to employ all his cares to accomplish his own preservation, and compelled him to be a tame spectator of the ruin of several provinces. "I contented myself, said he, with providing for the security of those distant parts, by the ministration of governors, who being either corrupted by the enemy, or apprehensive of punishment, never acquainted me with the unhappy situation of the people with whose welfare they were intrusted."

The Patriarchs of Constantinople had assumed an unlimited power; and as the emperors and their grandees generally retired to the churches, when the people were spirited up to insurrections, the patriarchs had consequently an opportunity of delivering them up to the popular fury, and never failed to exercise this power as they were directed by any particular fancy, by which means they always became the arbiters of public affairs, though in a very indirect manner.

When the elder Andronicus caused the Patriarch to be admonished not to intermeddle with the transactions of state, but to confine his attention to spiritual affairs, "such a request, replied that imperious priest, is as if the body should say to the soul, I do not claim any community with you, and have no occasion for your assistance in the exercise of my functions."

Such monstrous pretensions became insupportable to princes, and the patriarchs were frequently divested of their fees. But such a proceeding, in a superstitious nation, who detested all the ecclesiastical functions of the Patriarch, whom they considered as an intruder, produced continual schisms, each particular Patriarch, the old, the new, and the last elected, being supported by his own set of partizans.

Such conditions as these were much more pernicious than any disagreements on points of doctrine, because they resembled an hydra to whom every defeat was a renovation.

The rage of disputation became so natural to the Greeks, that Cantacuzenus, when he took Constantinople, found the

emperor John and his empress engaged in a council which had been summoned against some adversaries of the Monks; and when Mohammed the second besieged that city, the emperor could not suppress the theological animosities, and the council of Florence engaged the general attention much more than the Turkish army.

As every person, in common disputes, is sensible he may be deceived, a tenacious and untractable spirit seldom prevails to any extreme but in those controversies where religion is the subject; for there, as every person from the nature of the point in debate becomes persuaded that his own opinion is true, he grows exasperated against those, who, instead of concurring with his sentiments, endeavour to make him a convert to their own.

Those who may happen to read the history written by Pachymerus, will be effectually convinced of the unalterable inability of divines to accommodate their own disagreements, and will see an emperor who spent his days in assembling people of that class, listening to their disputations, and reproaching them for the inflexibility of their opinions: they will likewise behold another engaged with a hydra of controversies that were perpetually rising to new life, and will be sensible that the same pacific methods and persevering patience, the same inclination to finish their contentions; in a word, the same artless pliancy to their intrigues joined with the same deference to their aversions will never reconcile these implacable ecclesiastics while the world endures.

We shall present the reader with a remarkable instance of the disposition we have been describing. The Partisans of the patriarch Arsenus, were prevailed upon, by the solicitations of the emperor, to come into a treaty with those who were in the interest of the patriarch Joseph. This treaty specified that both parties should write down their several pretensions, and then throw the two papers which contained them into a pan of live coals, and if one of them should remain unconsumed, they were then to acquiesce with that determination from heaven; but if both should happen to be burnt, the parties were no longer to persist in their demands. The fire destroyed the two papers, the

factions were reconciled, and the peace continued for a day.

The next morning they pretended that the renunciation of their claims ought to flow from an internal persuasion, and not from chance ; and from that moment the contention was renewed with greater animosity than ever.

The disputes of divines should always be considered with great attention ; but at the same time this ought to be concealed as much as possible ; because, any visible solicitude to calm the contending parties never fails to credit their singularities, and consequently tempts them to believe their sentiments are of such importance as to comprehend the welfare of the state and the security of their sovereign.

It is altogether as impracticable to decide the disagreements of clergymen by attending to their affected subtilties, as it would be to abolish duels by erecting a court, with a delegation to trace a point of honour through all its refinements.

Such was the imprudence of the Greek emperors, that when a religious controversy had been lulled asleep by time, they again awakened it in all its rage. Justinian, Heraclius, and Manuel Comnenus proposed articles of faith to their ecclesiastics and laity who would certainly have been deceived in the truth, though it had flowed from the lips of those princes in all its purity. And as they were always defective in forms, and generally in essentials, and grew desirous of displaying their penetration, which they might have manifested to more advantage in other affairs confided to their judgment ; they engaged in vain disputes on the nature of God, who, as he withdraws himself from the proud curiosity of the learned, so he veils the Majesty of his existence, as effectually from the great men of the earth.

It is an error to believe any human power can be absolute and infallible in these respects, for such there never was, nor ever will be imparted to any mortal. The largest extent of temporal authority is confined to certain limitations, and when the Grand Seignior ordains a new taxation at Constantinople, the universal murmurs of his subjects make him sensible of those restrictions of his power which till then were concealed, from his observation. A Persian monarch may indeed compel a son to murder his father, or oblige a

parent to plunge his dagger into the heart of his child, but he can never force his subjects to drink wine. There is a general principle in every nation which is the invariable basis of power, and when once this principle is too much loaded, it infallibly shrinks into smaller dimensions.

An unacquaintedness with the true nature and limits of ecclesiastical and secular power, was the most pernicious source of all the calamities that befel the Greeks, and involved both priests and people in perpetual errors.

This great distinction, which constitutes all the tranquillity of a nation, is founded not only on religion, but on reason and nature, which never confound things really distinct in themselves, and which can only subsist in consequence of of that very distinction.

Though the priesthood among the ancient Romans did not form a separate body, yet the distinction we have been representing, was as well known to them as it can be to us. Clodius had consecrated the house of Cicero to the goddess of liberty, but when that great orator returned from his exile, he did not fail to demand it as his lawful property: the Pontiffs were of opinion, that if it had been so consecrated without an express order obtained from the people, it might be restored to him without any violation of religion. They have declared, says Cicero, that they only examined the validity of the consecration and not the law enacted by the people, and that they had decided the first article as pontiffs, and the second in the quality of senators.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE DURATION OF THE EASTERN EMPIRE ACCOUNTED FOR.
ITS DESTRUCTION.

AFTER this account of the Grecian empire, it seems natural to enquire how it could possibly subsist so long, and I believe sufficient reasons may be assigned for that duration.

The Arabians having invaded the empire and conquered several provinces, their chiefs became competitors for the Khalifat, and the flame of their first zeal only burst out in civil dissensions.

The same people having conquered Persia, and afterwards divided and weakened themselves in that country, the Greeks were no longer obliged to keep the principal forces of the empire stationed on the banks of the Euphrates.

Callinicus, an architect, who came from Syria to Constantinople, invented an artificial flame, which was easily ventilated into a point by means of a tube, and was of such a peculiar nature, that water and every other substance which extinguish common fire did but increase the violence of this. The Greeks were in possession of it for several years, and managed it in such a manner as made it capable of firing their enemies ships, particularly the Arabian fleet which sailed from Africa or the Syrian coasts to invade them even in Constantinople.

This flame was ranked among the secrets of state, and Constantine Porphyrogenitus in his treatise on the administration of the empire, and which he dedicated to his son Romanus, advises him to tell the Barbarians, when they should desire him to give them any of the Grecian fire, that he was not permitted to part with it, because an angel, who presented it to the emperor Constantine, commanded to refuse it to all other nations, and that those who had disobeyed that injunction were consumed by a fire from heaven the moment they entered the church.

Constantinople was the greatest, and almost the only city of commerce in the world ; for the Goths on the one side, and the Arabians on the other, had ruined all manner of traffic and industry in every other part. The silken manufactures were brought thither from Persia, and were even neglected in that country since the Arabian invasion. We may add to this that the Greeks were masters at sea, which opened an immense flow of riches into the state, and proved an inexhaustible source of relief in all its emergencies ; and if at any time there seemed to be any declension of the public affluence, it was immediately recruited by a new accession.

We shall justify this observation by a remarkable instance: the elder Andronicus Comnenus, though he was the Nero of the Greeks, yet amidst all his vices he was indefatigable in the suppression of injustice and vexations in the grandees, and it is a known fact, that during the three years of his reign, he restored several provinces to their ancient splendor.

In fine, the Barbarians having once fixed their settlement on the banks of the Danube, were no longer so formidable to the empire as before, but rather became useful to it as a barrier against other barbarous nations. And thus whilst the empire was harassed by any bad government, some particular incidents were always in reserve for its relief. Thus we see Spain and Portugal in a condition, amidst all their weakness, to support themselves with the treasures of the Indies : the temporal dominions of the Pope owe their safety to the respect paid to their sovereign, and the rovers of Barbary derive their security from the obstructions they fasten upon the commerce of lesser nations, and the very piracies of these people on inferior states, make them serviceable in their turn to the greater.

The Turkish empire is at present in the same state of declension to which that of the Greeks was formerly sunk, but in all probability it will still subsist a long time : for should any prince endanger it by pursuing his conquests to an immoderate extent, it will always be defended by the three trading powers of Europe, who are too sensible of their own interests ever to be unconcerned spectators of its fall.

It is happy for these trading powers, that God has permitted Turks and Spaniards to be in the world, for of all nations they are the most proper to enjoy a great empire with insignificance.

In the time of Basilius Porphyrogenitus, the Arabian power came to its period in Persia. Mohammed the son of Sambreal, who was then sovereign of that empire, invited four thousand Turks from the North, in the quality of auxiliaries ; but upon a sudden dissatisfaction conceived by this prince, he sent an army against them, which was soon put to flight by the Turks. Mohammed, in the height of his indignation against his pusillanimous soldiers, gave orders, that they should pass before him habited like women ; but they disappointed his anger and joined the Turks : upon which the united army immediately dislodged a garrison which was stationed to guard a bridge over the Araxes, and opened a free passage to a vast body of their countrymen.

When they had extended their conquests through Persia, they spread themselves from east to west over the territories of the empire, and Romanus Diogenes, who endeavoured to oppose their progress, became their prisoner ; after which they subdued all the Asiatic dominions of the Greeks down to the Bosphorus.

Some time after this event the Latins invaded the western regions in the reign of Alexis Comnenus. An unhappy schism had for a long time infused an implacable hatred between the nations of two different communions, and would have produced fatal effects much sooner, had not the Italians been more attentive to check the German emperors whom they feared, than they were to distress the Greek emperors whom they only hated.

Affairs were in this situation, when all Europe imbibed a religious belief that the place where Jesus Christ was born, as well as that where he accomplished his passion, being profaned by the infidels, the surest atonement they could make for their own sins, would be to dispossess those Barbarians of their acquisitions by force of arms. Europe at that time swarmed with people who were fond of war, and had many crimes to expiate, and as it was proposed

to them to obtain their remission by indulging their prevailing passion, every man armed himself for the crusade.

When this consecrated army arrived in the east, they besieged and made themselves masters of Nice, which they restored to the Greeks ; and, whilst the infidels were seized with a general consternation, Alexis and John Comnenus chased the Turks to the banks of Euphrates.

But advantageous as these crusades might be to the Greeks, the emperors trembled to see such a succession of fierce heroes and formidable armies marching through the heart of their dominions.

This induced them to leave nothing unattempted that might create a dissatisfaction in Europe at these expeditions ; and the votaries to the cross were continually ensnared by every instance of treachery that could possibly be expected from a timorous enemy.

It must be acknowledged that the French, who promoted these expeditions, had not practised any conduct that could render their presence very supportable ; and we may judge by the invectives of Anna Comnena against our nation, that we act without much precaution in foreign countries, and were at that time chargeable with the same exceptionable freedoms we are reproached for at this day.

A French nobleman was going to seat himself upon the emperor's throne, but Earl Baldwin caught him by the arm : " You ought to know, said he, that when we are in any country whatever, it is proper to comply with the customs that prevail there." " What a clown is He, replied the other, to sit whilst so many captains are standing ? "

The Germans, who came after the French, and were the most civil and undesigning people in the world, suffered very severely for our follies, and were continually embarrassed by a discontent which our countrymen had stirred up.

In fine, the aversion of those eastern people was worked up to the highest extreme ; and this, with some incivilities offered to the Venetian merchants, operating upon the ambition, avarice, and false zeal of that nation as well as the French, determined them to form a crusade against the Greeks.

The united army of these two European nations found their enemies altogether as pusillanimous and unwarlike as the Chinese appeared to the Tartars in our time. The Frenchmen ridiculed their effeminate habit, and walked through the streets of Constantinople dressed in flowered mantles, and carrying pens and paper in their hands, in derision of that nation, who had degenerated from all military discipline; and when the war was over, they refused to admit any Greeks into their troops.

The Venetians and French soon after declared for the western empire, and transferred the imperial throne to the Earl of Flanders, whose dominions being very distant, could not create any jealousy in the Italians. The Greeks still supported themselves in the east, being separated from the Turks by a chain of mountains, and divided from the Italians by the sea.

The Latins, who found no obstacles in their conquests, met with many in their settlement. The Greeks returned from Asia into Europe, retook Constantinople, and seized the greatest part of the east.

This new empire, however, was but a faint shadow of the former, and had no solid power for its basis.

It comprehended few territories in Asia, besides the provinces on this side the Meander and Sangar, and most of those in Europe were parcelled out into small sovereignties.

We may add to this, that during the sixty years the Latins were possessed of Constantinople, the conquered people being dispersed, and the victors engaged in war, all commerce was transferred to the cities in Italy, and Constantinople became divested of its riches.

The commerce even of the inland countries was carried on by the Latins. The Greeks, who were but newly re-established, and were likewise alarmed with innumerable apprehensions, became desirous to ingratiate themselves with the Genoese, by granting them a permission to traffic without paying any duties; and as they were unwilling to irritate the Venetians, who had not accepted of peace, but only consented to a truce, these were likewise discharged from the same payments.

Though Manuel Comnenus had suffered the navigation of the empire to decline before Constantinople was taken, yet it could be easily re-established, since commerce still subsisted: but when all maritime affairs became entirely neglected under the new empire, the mischief grew remediless, because the power of the empire was daily declining.

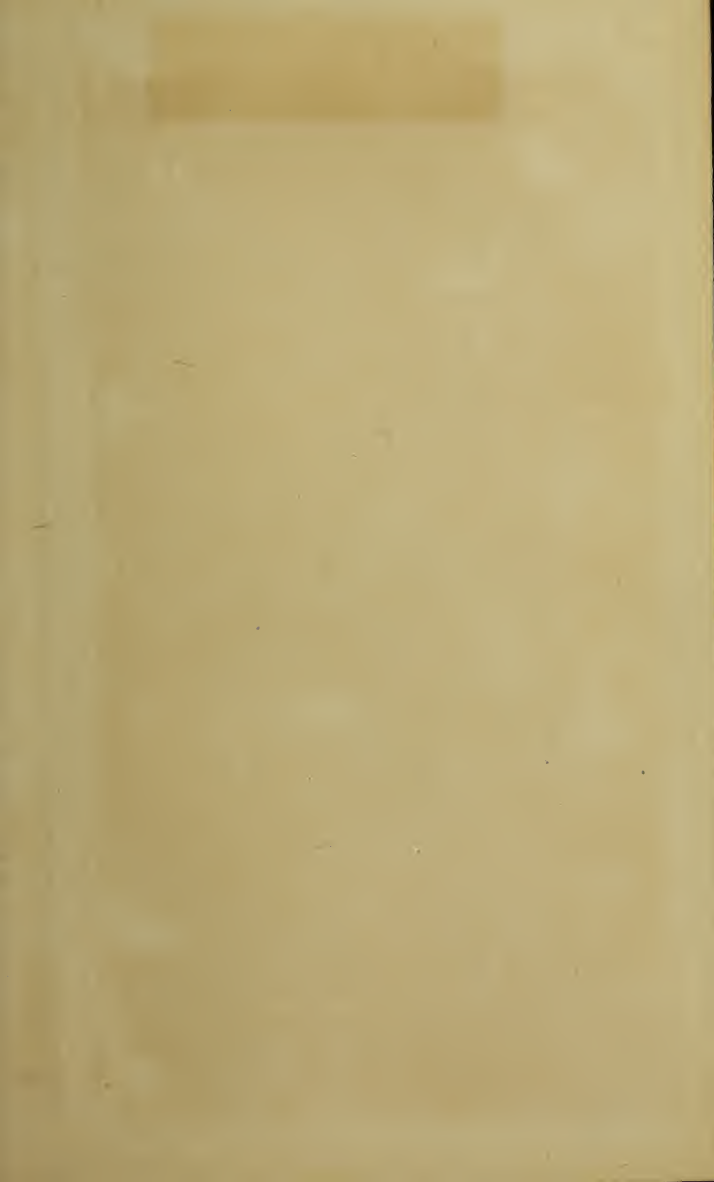
This state, which extended its dominion over many islands, and was intersected by the sea, which likewise surrounded several of its territories, was entirely unprovided of ships. The former communication no longer subsisted between the provinces: the inhabitants were obliged to shelter themselves in the inland parts from pirates; and when they thought themselves safe in such a sanctuary, they soon found it necessary to retire into the fortresses, to preserve themselves from the hostilities of the Turks.

These barbarous people were at that time engaged in a peculiar war against the Greeks, and might properly be called hunters of men. They sometimes marched two hundred leagues into a country to accomplish their depredations; and as they were in subjection to several sultans, it was impossible to purchase a peace from every tribe; and to procure it from any particular parties was altogether insignificant. These Barbarians had embraced Mohammedism, and their zeal for that religion strangely prompted them to ravage the Christian territories: besides, as they were the most unamiable people on earth, and married to wives as disagreeable as themselves, the moment they were acquainted with the Grecian women, all the rest of that sex became insupportable to them; and those beauteous females were continually exposed to the brutal passion of these Barbarians. In fine, they had been always accustomed to invade the properties of other people, and were the same Huns who had formerly involved the Roman empire in so many calamities. The Turks broke in, like a deluge, upon the shattered remains of the Grecian empire in Asia; and those of the inhabitants who were happy enough to escape their fury, fled before them to the Bosphorus, from whence such as could accommodate themselves with ships, sailed to those parts of the empire that were situated in Europe, which

occasioned a considerable addition to the number of the inhabitants, though they were diminished in a short period of time : for civil wars began to rage with so much fatality, that the two factions invited several Turkish sultans to their assistance, with this extravagant and inhuman stipulation, that all the people of the country, who were made captives from the opposite party, should be carried into slavery ; by which means each of those factions concurred in the destruction of their own country with a view of ruining their adversaries.

Bajazet having conquered all the other sultans, the Turks would then have acted agreeably to their future behaviour in the reign of Mahommed II. had not they been in danger of extermination by the Tartars.

I am now afraid to describe the miseries which resulted from these revolutions ; and shall only intimate, that the empire under its last monarchs, being contracted within the suburbs of Constantinople, finished its progress like the Rhine, which shrinks into a rivulet before it loses itself in the ocean.



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